



# American Girl

November/December 1994

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**Star-  
Bright  
Holiday  
Ideas!**

This is  
**YOUR LAST  
ISSUE!**  
Renew today!



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# American Girl®

Celebrating Girls, Yesterday and Today

November/December 1994



## The Greatest Gifts

Girls whose presents  
came from the heart

# 30

## A Season of Surprises

Utterly unexpected  
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## On the Cover

Meet Amy Lynn Gregerson, age 11. Amy likes to make gingerbread houses. Last Christmas, she put extra candy on hers to eat. But her dog, Champ, got to it first. "He ate part of it," says Amy, "and I ate the rest!"

Cover photos: Paul Tryba

*Amy Lynn Gregerson*



# Letters from You

## Happy Camping



I was happy when I saw the article in your July/August issue about camp. I was not thrilled to go, but after I read your article I couldn't wait!

*Heather Soucy*  
Age 10, Nashua, New Hampshire

## Winning Word



I was recently in my city spelling bee. Everyone had been eliminated except for me and one boy. When he got the word *cantankerous* and misspelled it, I remembered it as one of your buzzwords. I got it right and also the next word and won! Thank you for the buzzwords.

*Valerie Martinsen*  
Age 12, LaPorte, Indiana

## Talk It Out



I was happy to read in your July/August issue in Talk It Out that readers could write in. Now almost everybody has a chance to be in Talk It Out.

*Sarah Christensen*  
Age 11, Norwalk, Connecticut

## Girl Power



Thank you for recognizing in Talk It Out in the July/August issue that girls can do just as well as boys. I got to help fix the dryer once. Boys usually do that, don't they? Girls can do anything if they try!

*Ashley Loose*  
Age 9, Mill Creek, Washington

## Loopy Loops



I tried your "Loopy Loops and Sloppy 't's" article in the July/August issue. It worked for me and my friend. Her letters are really thin, and the article said it meant she can't stand clutter. Boy, is that true. She is a neat person all the time!

*Caitlin Weber*  
Age 12, Hastings, Minnesota

## Stinky Story



The handwriting personality thing stinks. Just because I write with my letters every which way doesn't mean my personality is all mixed up!

*Krista*  
Age 11, Tualatin, Oregon

# American Girl



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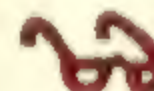


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# Girls Express



## Buzzword

American girls everywhere are using this buzzword this season:

## delectable

Say it: "deh-LECK-ta-bull"

What it means: delicious, pleasing

One way to use it: "Vanessa thought the holiday feast looked simply delectable."

The buzzword appears somewhere in this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it?



## A Real Jingle Belle

There's nothing like the sound of bells to ring in the holiday season. There are jingle bells, silver bells, and ten-year-old Rachel Stern's favorite—handbells.

Rachel plays in the handbell choir at her school in Sykesville, Maryland. In a handbell choir, each person usually plays two bells, and each bell rings a single note. It takes all 23 people in Rachel's choir to put together a song, note by note.

To perform, Rachel and the other ringers stand side by side behind a long table. The bells are lined up in front of them, smallest to largest. Rachel's bells, the F and F-sharp, are right in the middle.

Whenever the music calls for one of her notes, she flicks her wrist quickly to ring the bell loud and clear. "Your wrist can get tired during a long song," Rachel admits.

Rachel's favorite holiday tune to chime? "Deck the Halls," she says. "Because it's so fun and fast!"

Rachel was born to ring in the holidays. Her birthday is Christmas Day!







## Hello from Holidayland!

What's it like to live in a town with a holly-jolly name? We asked girls in the know.

"I'm from a town called **Santa Claus**.

Just living in a place whose name reminds you of fun is cool to me!"

Kelly Lynn Gunn  
Age 11, Santa Claus, Indiana

"In **Christmas**, Florida, there's a giant decorated tree that stays up all year."

Lindsey and Shelby Harper  
Ages 11 and 9, Christmas, Florida

"**Snowflake** was founded by Erastus Snow and William Jordon Flake. It hardly ever snows here—you'd think the town would be named Sunshine!"

Summer Barker  
Age 13, Snowflake, Arizona

## Kindness Counts!



In coming issues, we'll honor girls who have gone out of their way for others. Our first-ever Kindness Counts

award and an AG watch go to Irene DelaVega, 11, of Clovis, California.

"Irene stayed with me when my mom was two hours late picking me up from school," wrote her friend Robin Zirolu, 11. "She stayed the whole time! I would have cried if it weren't for her."

Know a kind girl? Tell us about her!



## True Story

Dear American Girl,

My name is Erika Zehner and I'm eight years old. I help my mom with her business—she's a veterinarian who makes house calls. We work on dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, snakes, turtles, and sometimes horses, too.

My mom has a mobile animal hospital. It looks like a camper, but instead of having a bed it has an examination table, a microscope, and a refrigerator to keep medicine in. We just got a new X-ray machine and a computer.

We can do almost anything an animal needs done. I've helped my mom with teeth cleanings, vaccinations, examinations—even surgeries. I vacuum up hair she shaves off the animals. I also run the anesthesia machine that keeps the animal asleep during an operation.

The most fun I had was the time I found out an emergency was coming to our house. It was a pregnant Chihuahua. It was sad because two of her puppies died, but I got to hold the puppy that lived. I cleaned it off and woke it up. It was so cute! It was a miracle that any of the puppies survived.

Yours truly,  
Erika Zehner  
Cedar Hill, Missouri

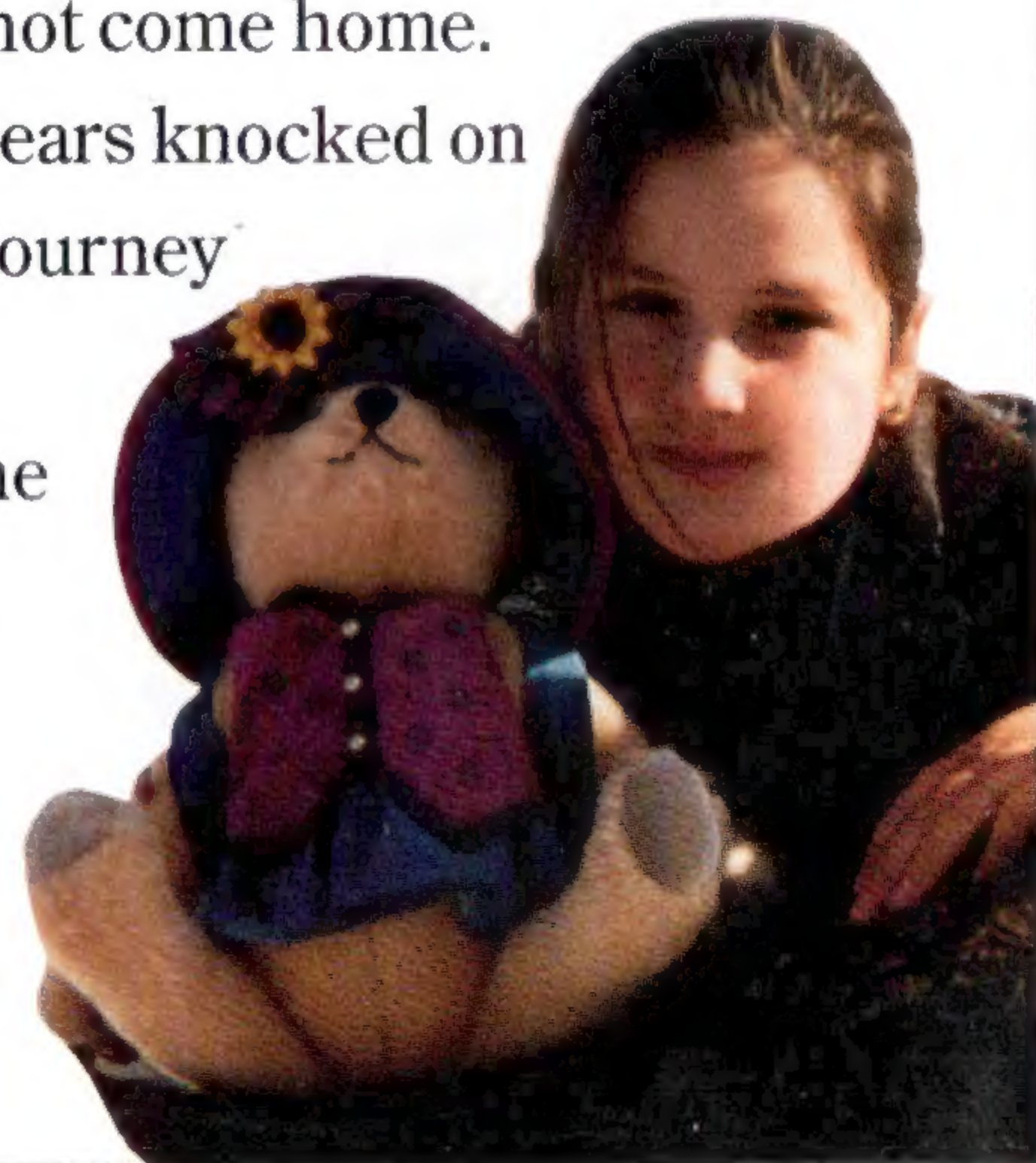


## Another Bear Is Back

In our last issue we told you about the travels of two Miss AG Bears we sent to readers. At the time, two of the traveling teddies were having such fun that they had not come home.

Just recently, one of the missing bears knocked on our door. This Miss AG started her journey with ten-year-old Molly Taylor of Somerville, Massachusetts. Then she spent two weeks in Sweden visiting Molly's pen pal, Carina Lindstrom.

Welcome home, Miss AG Bear!  
Or, as the Swedish would say,  
*Välkommen hem!*





# Make a Thankful Box



Every year, Katherine Terrell's family in Dallas, Texas, makes a Thankful Box.

"Starting in November, my family and I write notes about what we're thankful for and stick them in a box," writes Katherine, age 10. "At Thanksgiving dinner we open the box and read the notes." What a great way to count your blessings!

## Coming to a Theater Near You!

Two great old movies about American girls have been remade for the silver screen. Are the new versions better than the old? See both this winter and decide for yourself!



**Little Women** is the tale of life with the March sisters in the 1800s.

**The oldie:** Louisa May Alcott's classic story was first made into a movie in 1933. Another version, made in 1949, features Elizabeth Taylor when she was 17 years old!

**The new movie:** Winona Ryder (pictured above, far right) stars as sister Jo. "It was my favorite book. I wanted to be in this movie so girls of today could enjoy it," she says.



In **Miracle on 34th Street**, a young girl learns the true meaning of Christmas from a department-store Santa Claus.

**The oldie:** The 1947 version is a holiday favorite. You can see it on TV a zillion times in December.

**The new movie:** This time the story takes place in modern-day New York. It stars Mara Wilson (pictured above), last seen in *Mrs. Doubtfire*.

Pass the popcorn, please!

A.G.'s

ROLL



### Your answers:

In the July/August issue we asked what your dream pet would be.

More than 4,000 of you wrote in!

Here are the top animal answers:

1. horse
2. dog
3. monkey
4. tiger
5. dolphin

In real life, most of you have dogs as pets. Kristen Mariotti, 11, of Springfield, Massachusetts, has a great pet name. She calls her dog Huckleberry Bushwacker!

### Next question:

We want to know what makes a great birthday party. What are the best party themes? Games? Foods? What do you like to give as a gift? What's the most creative gift you've ever received? Send us your ideas! Use your own paper if you need more room.

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Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



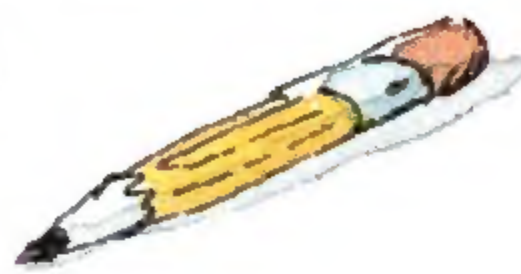
## Write to Us!

Send your response to the A.G. Poll, along with your answers to other questions in Girls Express, to the address below. Be sure to include your name and AGE.

American Girl

GirlsExpress

8400 Fairway Place  
Middleton, WI 53562



## Help Wanted!

Brrrrr! Sometimes it's just too cold to go outside. We want your ideas on fun things to do when you're stuck indoors. Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



# Super Sisters

*The truth is out! Your sisters don't always drive you nuts. In fact, many of you think they're splendidiferous!*

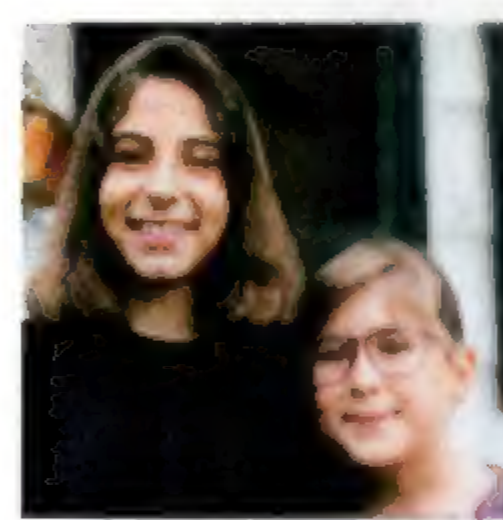


"My sister Amorie, who's two years old, is the best. If I fall down she comes and hugs me. In my gymnastics class

she likes to say, 'Go, Steph!'"

Stephanie Lake

Age 8, Elyria, Ohio



"When my seven-year-old sister, Katharine, comes home from school and sees me, her whole face lights up. It makes

me feel good inside."

Corrie Fagut

Age 10, Liverpool, New York



"My sister Micheala is fourteen years old. We made a holiday called Sister's Day, where we do stuff like ride bikes and play

checkers. She shows me good moves!"

JOANNA HOGAN

Age 9, Tucson, Arizona



"My sister Alison is nine years old. She's the best because she puts notes like this in my lunch box:

'To Julie: Having a nice day? I love you.'"

Julie Rafalowsky

Age 7, Glastonbury, Connecticut





"I trust my sister Jackie, who's twelve, more than anyone. I love her so much. I only see her a few months of the year because she's my stepsister. But I always wanted a sister, and now I have one!"

**Cesarae Dimino**  
Age 11, Las Vegas, Nevada



"I not only have one sister, I have four! Hannah is seven years old, and we love to play dolls. Abigail's four, and we love to dance together.

Rachel's two. She likes to pretend she's our grandma! Amelia is seven months—I love to play with her on the floor. All my sisters are wonderful."

**Tobie Gutierrez**  
Age 9, Ventura, California



"My sister Tricia, who's fifteen, is special because she was in New

Hampshire's Winter Special Olympics. She got a silver and two fifth-place ribbons."

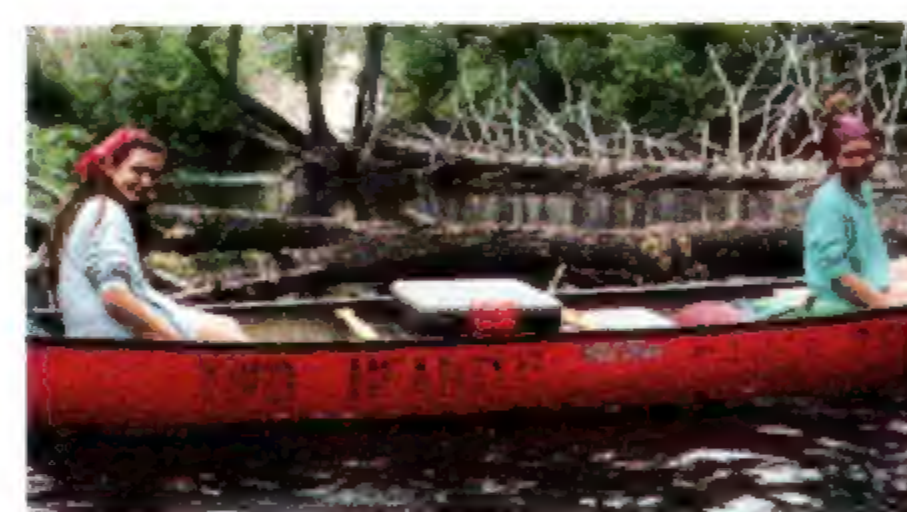
**Heather Mueller**  
Age 10, Wolfeboro, New Hampshire



"My sister Michelle is thirteen years old. She is the best because:

1. She helps me with my homework.
2. She sometimes doesn't tell on me.
3. She doesn't boss me around.
4. She plays games with me.
5. When I need help, she doesn't just watch TV."

**Stephanie Giroux**  
Age 10, Santa Monica, California



"My sister Chelsea is fourteen. She's faster than I am, and she makes me challenge myself to

beat her. Some people say the best way to try a friendship is to put two people in a canoe and make them paddle. My sister and I love to canoe together. If I didn't have Chelsea, I couldn't be the same person I am now."

**Liza Gorkiewicz**  
Age 12, Charlevoix, Michigan

"I don't have a sister, but I have a brother. Matthew is eleven years old. He taught me how to snap my fingers, whistle, tie my shoes, and blow a bubble!"

**Wendy Riley**

Age 10, Jefferson City, Missouri





# Room Rights

We asked readers: Do you get enough privacy at home?  
How do you feel about sharing a bedroom?



I share a room with my sister, who is seven years old. I like talking about the day's activities with her

before I go to sleep, but I'd like more privacy, too. Sometimes when I try to do my homework, my sister wants to talk to me. I let her talk, and then I shut the door and get to work.

*Johanna Unke*

Age 9, Grand Forks, North Dakota



I used to share a room with my older sister. Sometimes she'd lock me out of the room. When I was in

there she would burst in and turn the music on max and I couldn't do my homework.

*Erin Littlejohn*

Age 10, Troy, New York



I don't share my room—yet. My sister is two months old. I'm not sure how I will feel in a few months

when she moves in with me. Right now I can close my bedroom door and no one bothers me.

*Keitra Laneil Clack*

Age 10, Austin, Texas



I have my own room. My older brother used to come in my room without asking when I was busy.

That got annoying. My family made an agreement that if a bedroom door is closed you can't be disturbed.

*Marcie de Jesus*

Age 10, Hampton, New Hampshire



My family has some rules that help everyone have their privacy.

They are: Do not go in someone's room without their permission, ask if you can come in, and don't touch anything in another person's bedroom.

*Lauren Evette Williams*

Age 11, New Castle, Delaware



My family has a room we call the privacy room. Each member of our family can spend one or two hours

in that room and no one is allowed to go in or bother them.

*Gioia Gayrien*

Age 12, Paradise Valley, Arizona





I share a room with my sister, who's ten years old. We have one closet, so we divide it. She gets one half, and I get the other. We don't have a *lot* of rules, though. Mostly you just shouldn't mess with each other's stuff.

**Robin Leith**

Age 13, Tucson, Arizona



My advice to girls who share a room is to keep your things on your side of the room. And keep out of your sister's way. My sister and I share a room. We put my bed on one side and her bed on the other. We put the dresser in the middle to separate them. We share the dresser, too. We each have a drawer for our own things, and we share two drawers.

**Kimberly Higgins**

Age 13, Albuquerque, New Mexico



Find someplace else inside or outside where you can go when you need privacy. I have a fort in some trees and when I want to be alone I go there.

**Jennifer Griggs**

Age 12, Bristol, Vermont



Compromise! Talk politely to your family about getting some more time to yourself. If you get mad, they'll be less likely to agree with you and to see themselves in your position.

**Domi Le**

Age 14, Livermore, California

## What to Do If You Share a Room



### Be creative!

Even if the whole bedroom isn't yours, you can set aside special areas that are yours alone. Divide the storage areas and use furniture to define separate spaces for you and your roommate. Remember to share the walls, too. Hang your posters on one wall and let your sister put hers on the other, *even* if you don't like them. Get two bulletin boards—one for each of you to decorate.



### Remember your sister's needs.

The girls who found sharing a room the easiest were the ones who remembered that their sisters need privacy, too. If you let your sister have the room when *she* has friends over, she'll be more inclined to do the same for you.

## Let's Talk Some More

**American Girl** invites you to send in answers to **Talk It Out**. Some will be printed in a future issue.

**Next subject: Moving.** Have you ever had to pack up and move to a new town? Tell us what it was like. What was the hardest thing about moving? What was the best thing? What advice would you give to another girl who has to move?

Send your answers and a school picture to:

**American Girl**, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562. Deadline: December 1, 1994. Be sure to include your name and age. ★





1774

# FELICITY'S DANCING SHOES

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BY VALERIE TRIPP  
ILLUSTRATED BY DAN ANDREASEN



Dancing lessons are hard enough for Felicity. But when Annabelle is her partner, they become unbearable. Only one thing will help: new shoes.

**F**elicity Merriman ran up the steps of Miss Manderly's house and rushed inside. She was quite wet from running through the rain, so she shook the water off her petticoats before she went into the parlor and sat next to her friend Elizabeth.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Annabelle, Elizabeth's elder sister. "You look as if you were blown here by a hurricane!" She stared at Felicity's messy hair and touched her own perfect curls. "I'm glad *my* hair doesn't look like a scrub mop."

"My hair is just a bit wet," Felicity said crossly. She straightened her cap and frowned. Every day Annabelle found *something* mean to say about Felicity. She criticized her hair, her dress, her voice, or her manners.

Elizabeth squeezed Felicity's hand. "Don't let old Annabelle Bananabelle bother you," she whispered. But Felicity couldn't help feeling angry.

"Young ladies," said Miss Manderly. "We will begin today with a dancing lesson. Elizabeth, you will be my partner. Annabelle, you will dance with Felicity."

Felicity sighed, and Elizabeth gave her a look full of understanding. It was always dreadful to be the one who had to dance with Annabelle. But Felicity knew the sad truth—

she was not a good dancer with *any* partner. No matter how hard she tried, she could not seem to remember how one step led to another. Annabelle always found a great deal to say about her dancing.

Felicity took her place next to Annabelle and nervously watched Miss Manderly demonstrate the dance steps.

"Stay light on your feet," Miss Manderly said. "Do as I do. Gracefully, young ladies!"

Felicity struggled to follow Miss Manderly's directions, but her feet would not cooperate. They wandered off in wrong directions and tangled themselves up.

Annabelle was no help. She sank down when Felicity rose up. She stepped forward when Felicity stepped back. She hopped before Felicity did and turned after Felicity did. She hissed directions. "No! Step back!" she whispered fiercely.

Felicity made more and more mistakes. At one point she lost her balance, fell toward Annabelle, and *bump!* smashed right into her. Felicity's nose banged into Annabelle's shoulder and her foot landed with a thud on Annabelle's toe.

"Ouch! My toe! Oh, my toe!" screeched Annabelle. "You've stepped on my toe, you clumsy girl!" Moaning, Annabelle grabbed her foot in both hands and fell back into a chair.



"I'm sorry," Felicity apologized. "I didn't..."

"'Tis no wonder my toe is crushed," Annabelle fussed. "You always wear those dreadful shoes!"

Everyone looked down at Felicity's feet. Usually, Felicity did not give her shoes a moment's thought. But now that Annabelle had drawn attention to them, Felicity was ashamed. Her everyday shoes looked scuffed, ugly, and big. Compared with the dainty shoes Annabelle and Elizabeth wore, Felicity's shoes looked as heavy as horseshoes.

"I don't suppose you have any proper shoes to wear," sniffed Annabelle.

"Annabelle! That will do," said Miss Manderly firmly. "Felicity has apologized, and I am sure she will be more careful in the future. Practice will help her. 'Tis no matter how clumsy one's shoes are. Gracefulness is in the foot, not the shoe."

Annabelle flashed Felicity a satisfied smirk. They'd both heard Miss Manderly call Felicity's shoes clumsy.

Suddenly Felicity was filled with fury. *That Annabelle!* she thought. *She always humiliates me! I'll show her! Somehow, I shall get some dainty shoes. Annabelle won't embarrass me again!*

**F**elicity's younger sister, Nan, was waiting for her when she got home. As usual, Nan was full of curiosity about lessons. "Lissie," she asked eagerly, "did Miss Manderly teach you a new dance today?"

"Aye, she did," said Felicity dully as she put

on her apron. Nan *always* asked about dancing. She loved it as much as Felicity hated it.

"Oh! Please, Lissie, will you teach me the dance?" Nan begged. "Please?"

Suddenly Felicity had an idea. She smiled. Perhaps she had found a way to have the dainty shoes she wanted! "I'd be glad to teach you the dance, Nan," she said. "It's a dandy one. But I must ask you to do me a favor in return."

---

Felicity was filled with fury. *That Annabelle!* she thought. *She always humiliates me! I'll show her!*

---

"A favor?" asked Nan.

"Aye," said Felicity. "I will teach you all the dances Miss Manderly teaches me if you will let me borrow your brocade shoes for lessons from now on."

Nan tilted her head and asked, "Do you mean my brocade shoes like the ones you had until you ruined them?"

"Yes," said Felicity quickly. She might have known Nan would remember that. "But I won't ruin yours. I promise."

Nan was cautious. "Well..." she said.

"Of course, if you don't want to learn the dances, you needn't lend me the shoes," said Felicity lightly, as if she did not care.

"Oh, but I *do* want to learn the dances," said Nan. She hurried to fetch the shoes from the clothes press and give them to Felicity. "Won't they be too small for you?"

"Not at all," said Felicity, sounding more





sure than she was. She kicked off her heavy shoes and tried to fit her right foot into one of Nan's dainty shoes. It was too narrow and much too short, but Felicity did not give up. She pulled very hard on the back of the shoe, wiggled her foot, and bent her toes. Finally, she squeezed her heel inside. "There!" she said, a little out of breath. "You see? I have only to bend my toes a bit and it fits perfectly."

Nan looked doubtful. "But will you be able to dance?" she asked.

"Of course!" answered Felicity. She stood. Her foot was uncomfortable in the tight shoe, but she smiled at Nan anyway. "I think perhaps I will wear my old shoes while I teach you," she said. "It won't do to wear out yours."

When Felicity went to her lessons the next

afternoon, she carried Nan's shoes hidden in a cloth bag. Felicity and Nan had agreed not to tell Mother about their arrangement. It just wasn't the sort of thing Mother would approve of.

Once at Miss Manderly's, Felicity slipped into the garden shed. She put her heavy shoes in the bag and hid the bag in a basket under some gardening tools. It looked as if no one had used the tools in a long time. Then she sat on the bench and struggled to pull on Nan's shoes. The brocade made ripping noises, but Felicity ignored them. With her feet squeezed into the dainty shoes, Felicity walked, painfully but proudly, into Miss Manderly's house.

"Oh, Lissie! How pretty!" exclaimed





Elizabeth when she saw Felicity's new shoes.

Annabelle just snorted. *Good!* Felicity thought. *Old Annabelle Bananabelle can find nothing mean to say today!*

While Felicity was seated, the shoes were not *too* uncomfortable, though her feet tingled as if they were being pricked with needles and pins. When she stood for the dance lesson, however, the shoes pinched her toes badly. Felicity tried not to think about the pain. She was very careful during dance lessons and made far fewer mistakes than usual. Miss Manderly smiled with approval.

"Lissie!" said Elizabeth softly, in the middle of a curtsy. "Your new shoes make such a difference in your dancing! They're magic!"

"Indeed they are," Felicity agreed happily.

She was delighted with her magic new shoes.

After lessons, back in the gardener's shed, Felicity quickly peeled off the brocade shoes, put them in the bag, and hid the bag under the tools in the basket. She wiggled her toes and rubbed her cramped and weary feet all over. Her old shoes felt as big as boats when she put them on. *Gracious!* thought Felicity. *No one could dance gracefully in these!*

Very good, Felicity!" said Miss Manderly a few weeks later. "Your dancing has certainly improved."

Felicity and Elizabeth exchanged a smile. They knew that the secret of Felicity's



improvement was in her new shoes. Ever since Felicity had started to wear them, her dancing had become better and better. Even Annabelle had stopped making mean comments about it.

Sometimes it seemed to Felicity that the shoes were getting smaller every day, because every day they hurt more. But whenever she thought about returning to her old shoes, she remembered how Annabelle had humiliated her. Squeezed feet were less painful than hurt pride.

Nan never let Felicity forget her promise to teach her dancing in return for wearing the brocade shoes. Every day, when Felicity came home from Miss Manderly's, Nan was waiting for her.

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## Felicity's relief turned to panic. Her old shoes were gone! They'd disappeared!

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"Time for my dance lesson!" she'd say cheerfully. And Felicity would have to repeat the dance lesson step by step.

Nan was a fussy student. "Show me exactly how Miss Manderly did it," she'd say. Nan wanted to know every detail of the dance, every step and hop and turn. Felicity had to memorize all Miss Manderly's movements. Nan could always tell when she was just making something up because she had forgotten the real steps. Nan was very careful. She made Felicity go over and over the dance until she was sure she had it right.

With Nan, Felicity danced in her stocking feet. She wouldn't dream of dancing in her heavy shoes, even though mistakes didn't matter so much at home since Annabelle wasn't there to point them out loudly. Indeed, Felicity began to think that dancing was *almost* fun with Nan.

**O**ne afternoon, Miss Manderly taught the girls a particularly long and complicated dance. Afterward, Felicity limped her way to the garden shed. She collapsed on the bench, sighed in relief, and looked around for the garden basket containing her old shoes. In an instant, her relief turned to panic. The basket was gone! Her old shoes were gone! They'd disappeared!

Frantically, Felicity searched the tiny shed. Where could the basket be? She looked under flowerpots and buckets. She looked on shelves and in corners. She looked behind watering cans, rakes, and hoes. The basket was nowhere to be seen. She rushed outside the shed and began to search behind bushes and trees. *What shall I do?* she thought. *Mother will be furious if I've lost my old shoes. And if I have to wear these pinching shoes all the time, I shall die! I have to find that basket!*

Felicity was on her hands and knees, looking under a garden bench, when she heard Miss Manderly call to her from the window, "Gracious, Felicity! What are you doing?"

"Miss Manderly," Felicity cried. "Where is your garden basket with the tools in it?"

Miss Manderly looked surprised. "My





garden basket?" she said. "I suppose Mr. Halibut the gardener came to pick it up today. He said he'd come fetch the tools to clean them before he put them away for the winter. But..."

"Mr. Halibut!" exclaimed Felicity, jumping up. "Where did he go?"

"He gardens for the Milners, too, on Francis Street," said Miss Manderly, still confused.

"Thank you, Miss Manderly," said Felicity. And with that, she took off at a run.

Ah, but she had forgotten that she was still wearing Nan's shoes! Running in the little shoes was even more painful than dancing in them. Felicity felt as if knives were stabbing her in the foot with each step. She could also feel a nasty blister forming on one heel. She

hadn't gone far before she couldn't stand it any longer. Though the ground was cold and muddy, Felicity tugged off Nan's shoes and shoved them in her pockets.

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Felicity felt as if knives were stabbing her in the foot with each step. She couldn't stand it any longer.

---

Felicity could actually run faster without the shoes. She ran past shops and houses, darted around carriages and carts, and ducked through gates and under hedges until she reached Francis Street. She hurried around



to the back of the Milners' house just in time to see Mr. Halibut leaving. He had Miss Manderly's basket over his arm.

"Mr. Halibut, sir," Felicity cried, all in a flutter. "I've left a basket in your bag. I mean a bag in your basket. It's got my shoes in it. The bag does. Please, may I have it back?"

Mr. Halibut looked surprised. He held the basket out to Felicity without saying a word. Quickly, she took out the bag.

"Thank you, Mr. Halibut," she said. She clutched the bag to her chest and headed home. She could not put her shoes on because her stockings were wet and filthy. Her poor bruised feet were numb with cold anyway. And so she stumbled along in her stocking feet.

**T**he next day Felicity plodded off to lessons in her old shoes. As soon as she'd come home the day before and Mother had seen her ruined stockings, she had had to confess the whole long story.

"Felicity," Mother had said firmly. "This nonsense will stop. You may no longer borrow Nan's shoes."

Now Felicity's heart was as heavy as her old shoes. She knew her dancing would be just as it had been before. She would be clumsy, and Annabelle would gleefully call attention to all her mistakes.

In fact, Annabelle did not even wait for the dance lesson to begin before she said something mean. "Gracious me!" she said loudly. "You're wearing those dreadful shoes

again! We must all look out for our toes!"

Felicity was not surprised.

But everyone—even Annabelle—*was* surprised when the lesson began. Felicity was not clumsy at all! She was light on her feet! She was graceful! Her old black shoes flew through the dance without a single mistake.

"You're dancing so well!" whispered Elizabeth, delighted. "I guess the magic was not in the new shoes after all!"

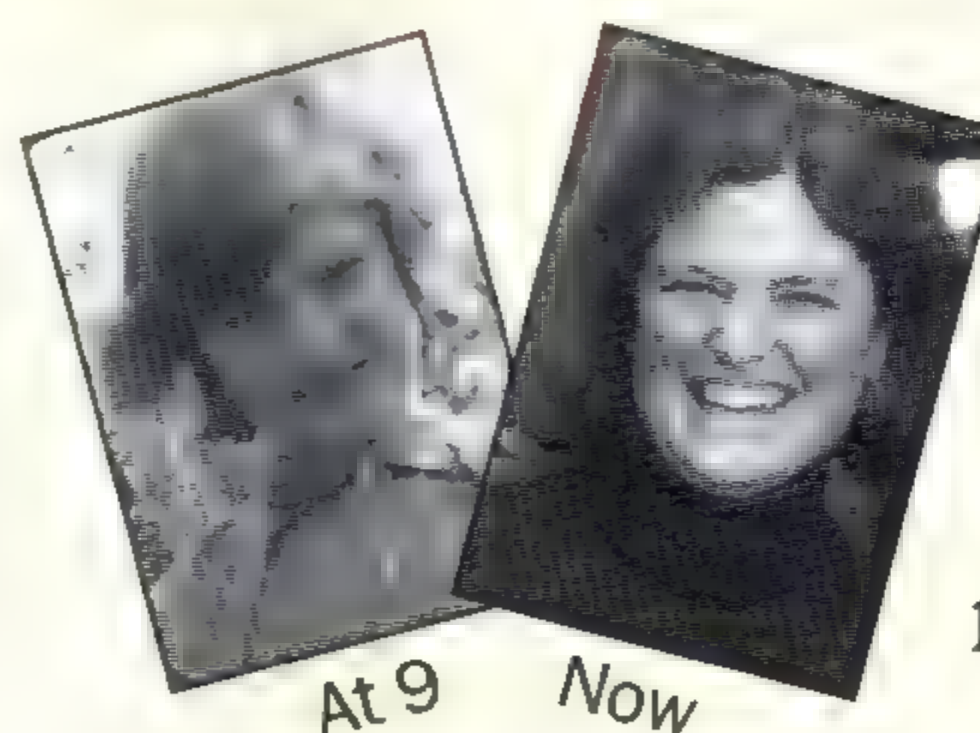
Felicity laughed. Suddenly she knew what the real magic *was*. Without realizing it, she had been practicing her dancing every day when she gave Nan her lessons. It was the practice that had made the difference in her dancing, not magic shoes. She had suffered the pain of the pinching shoes for no reason. What a joke she had played on herself!

"Well, Elizabeth," she said to her friend happily. "After all, gracefulness is in the foot, not the shoe." ★



Meet the Author

**Valerie Tripp**



When I took dancing lessons, I was taller than all the boys in my class. That meant I usually had to dance with the teacher, which was embarrassing. But at least he was the best dancer in the class!

**Valerie Tripp is the author of the Felicity books in The American Girls Collection.**



By Krystyna Poray Goddu

# SHALL WE

*In colonial days, girls like Felicity were judged by how well they danced. Step through time and see how things changed!*



## 1700s

Dance played a big role in a wealthy girl's education. Dancing lessons—sometimes nine hours a week—were supposed to teach a girl graceful dancing and good manners, too.

Dancing masters taught girls and boys dances such as the *minuet* (min-ye-WET) in separate classes. Although the minuet is a dance for two people, couples danced side by side—never close and face to face. At fancy parties, only one couple at a time danced the minuet, so there was a lot of pressure on a girl to “show herself to best advantage.”

### Queen of dances

Try these steps from the minuet. The first step is the hardest. Remember, grace is the key!



Step forward on your right foot, rising to balance on the ball of your foot. Your left heel should touch your right heel—not the ground!



Sink down onto your right heel. Your left heel should still touch your right heel, and your left toe should rest on the ground.



Step forward on your left foot, rising to the ball of your foot. Staying on the balls of your feet, step forward right, then left.



Finally, sink down on your left heel, bringing both your heels together. Now try these steps again *without wobbling!*



# DANCE?

## 1800s



In the 1800s people still thought girls could become proper ladies by learning to dance, but now they thought dance was

good exercise, too. Dancing lessons weren't just for rich girls anymore. By the late 1800s, dancing was taught in most girls' schools. One European visitor wrote home that American girls did not always know how to sew, but they always knew how to dance!

### Dancing days

Then as now, dancing school was expensive. Dancing lessons cost nearly three times as much as lessons for reading and arithmetic!

Girls were often warned not to dance the waltz, the polka, and other new "round" dances, in which couples danced very close together and face to face. Despite the protests, these "shocking" dances became very popular.



### Following the rules

These girls and boys are dancing the Virginia reel, a type of square dance. Shorter skirts let the girls dance more freely in the 1800s. Still, girls followed

many strict rules. They could enjoy themselves dancing with boys at parties and balls. But many people thought it was disgraceful for a girl to dance alone onstage to entertain other people.





# 1900s

In this century, ideas about what girls can and can't do have changed. Dance has changed, too! In the early 1900s people began to accept dance as a *performing* art, and girls began to dance to entertain other people—and for their own enjoyment. Girls took lessons in ballet, tap, and modern dance. In 1927, a dance magazine invited girls to earn money for dancing lessons by selling magazine subscriptions.



## Tap dancing

Tap lessons first became popular in America in the 1930s, with the help of Hollywood musicals and stars like Shirley Temple.

More than 30 years later, this chorus line from the 1960s is ready to show off its best tap dancing at a year-end recital.



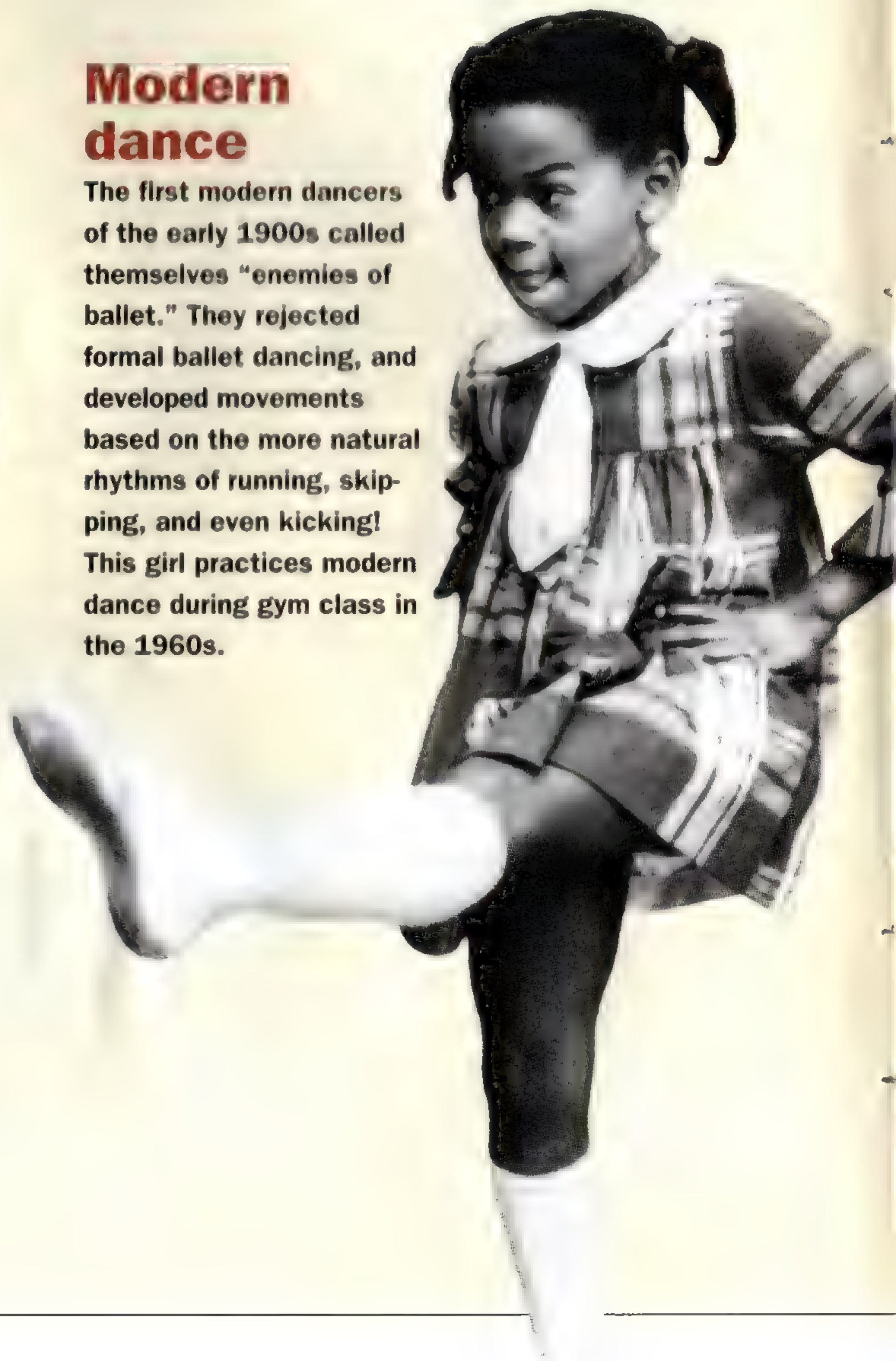
## Ballet

Russian ballerinas thrilled American audiences in the 1950s, and ballet lessons soon became all the rage for American girls. At that time, there were few standards for teaching

ballet in America. Some teachers who'd taught tap dancing added ballet simply because it was the "in" thing. Sometimes tap, jazz, and ballet were taught all in one class!

## Modern dance

The first modern dancers of the early 1900s called themselves "enemies of ballet." They rejected formal ballet dancing, and developed movements based on the more natural rhythms of running, skipping, and even kicking! This girl practices modern dance during gym class in the 1960s.





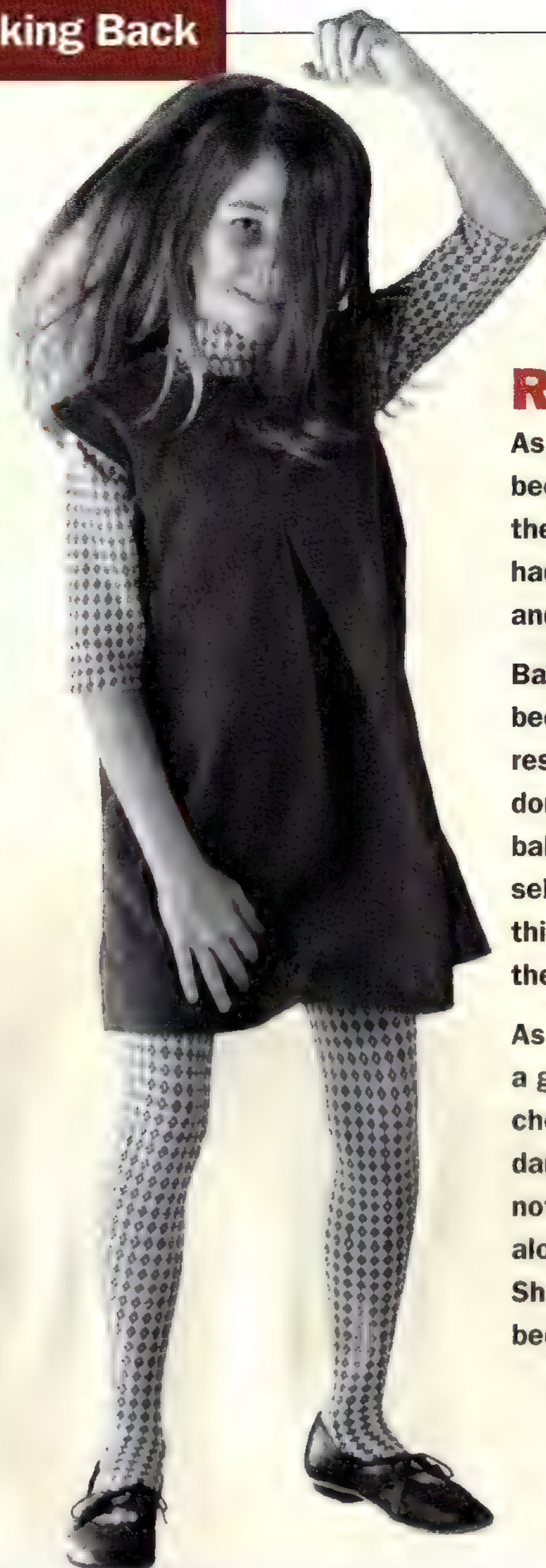


## May I have this dance?

Though more girls were dancing onstage, many parents wanted their daughters to know how to dance at formal gatherings like weddings. Ballroom dancing was still considered a social art that boys and girls needed to know. This photo from

the 1950s shows boys and girls at ballroom dance class.

Girls wore their best dresses and waited for boys to ask them to dance. Boys led the dance steps, and girls were expected to follow. Girls who weren't asked to dance were teased and called wallflowers.



## Rock 'n' Roll

As rock 'n' roll music became more popular in the 1960s, new dances had fewer rules to follow—and fewer rules to break!

Ballroom dancing lessons became less popular. As a result, many parents now don't know how to do ballroom dances themselves, and don't seem to think it's so important for their daughters to learn.

As with so many things, a girl today has lots more choices. She can take dance lessons or decide not to. She can dance alone or with a partner. She can dance simply because *she* wants to! ★

## Do the American Girl Walk!

Today, many girls are country line dancing. Try these steps with your friends or family!



Step 2

### RIGHT GRAPEVINE

1. Right foot step to side
2. Cross left foot behind right
3. Right foot step to side
4. Kick left foot in front



Step 8

### LEFT GRAPEVINE

5. Left foot step to side
6. Cross right foot behind left
7. Left foot step to side
8. Kick right foot in front



Step 9

### FORWARD WALK

9. Walk forward: right, left, right, left



Step 11

### JAZZ BOX

10. Cross right foot in front of left foot
11. Step back on left foot
12. Step to the side on right foot
13. Step left foot together with right foot



## Craft

# Wrap Up a Rainbow!

Bright and beautiful headbands and bracelets make wonderful gifts—and add a colorful touch to your own holiday outfits!

## Headband

### YOU WILL NEED

- Embroidery thread. You also can use yarn, metallic thread, or Perle cotton. Perle cotton is thicker than embroidery thread, so it's easier to handle. It's sold in craft and fabric stores. Note: The directions are the same for whichever material you use.
- Scissors
- Double-sided tape, available at craft stores. This is 2-sided tape with a peel-off backing on 1 side.
- Plastic headband with no teeth
- White glue, such as Elmer's
- Large-eyed needle, such as an embroidery or tapestry needle



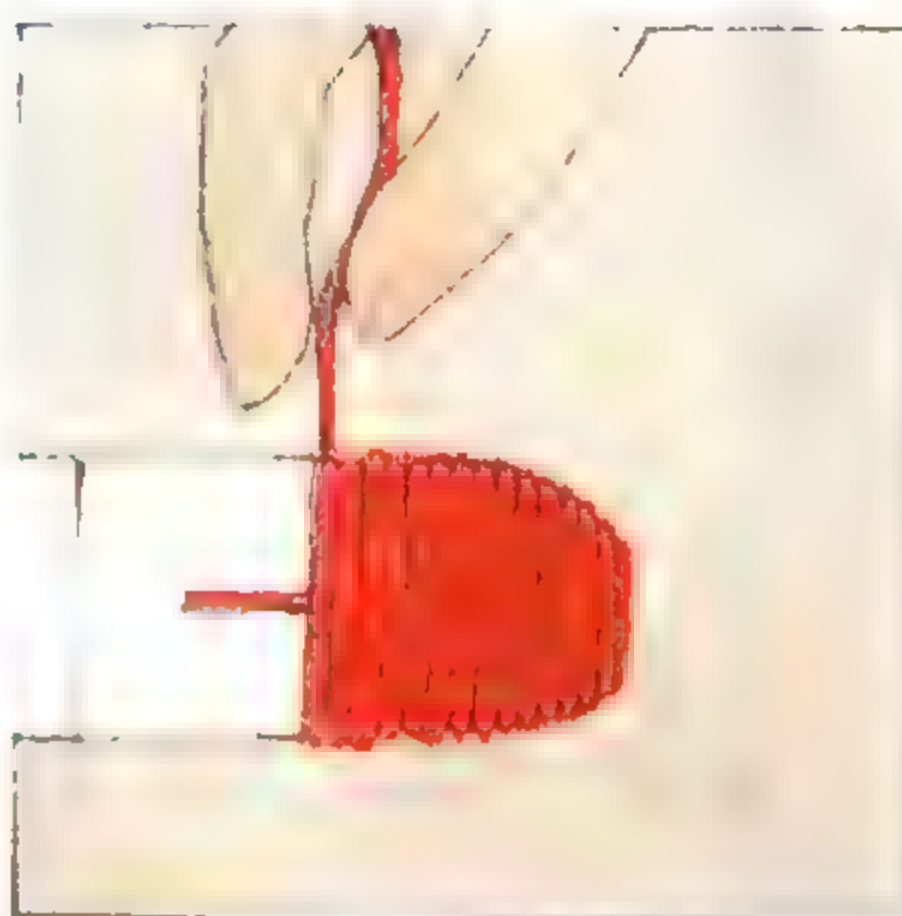
**1** Wind the embroidery thread into a small ball, making a ball for each color of thread. Cut the double-sided tape into 7 or 8 pieces that are each about 2 inches long.



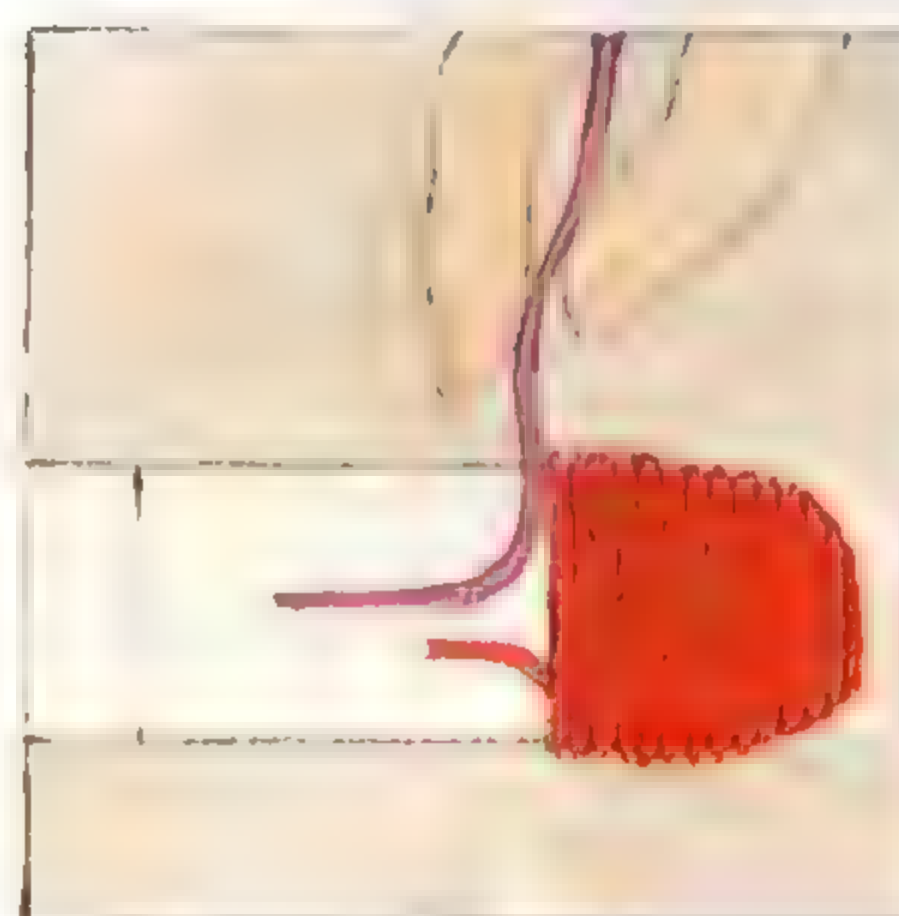
**2** Cover the top of the headband with the tape. Peel off the backing from 1 end piece only. If the tape is wider than the headband, fold it around the headband after you remove the backing.



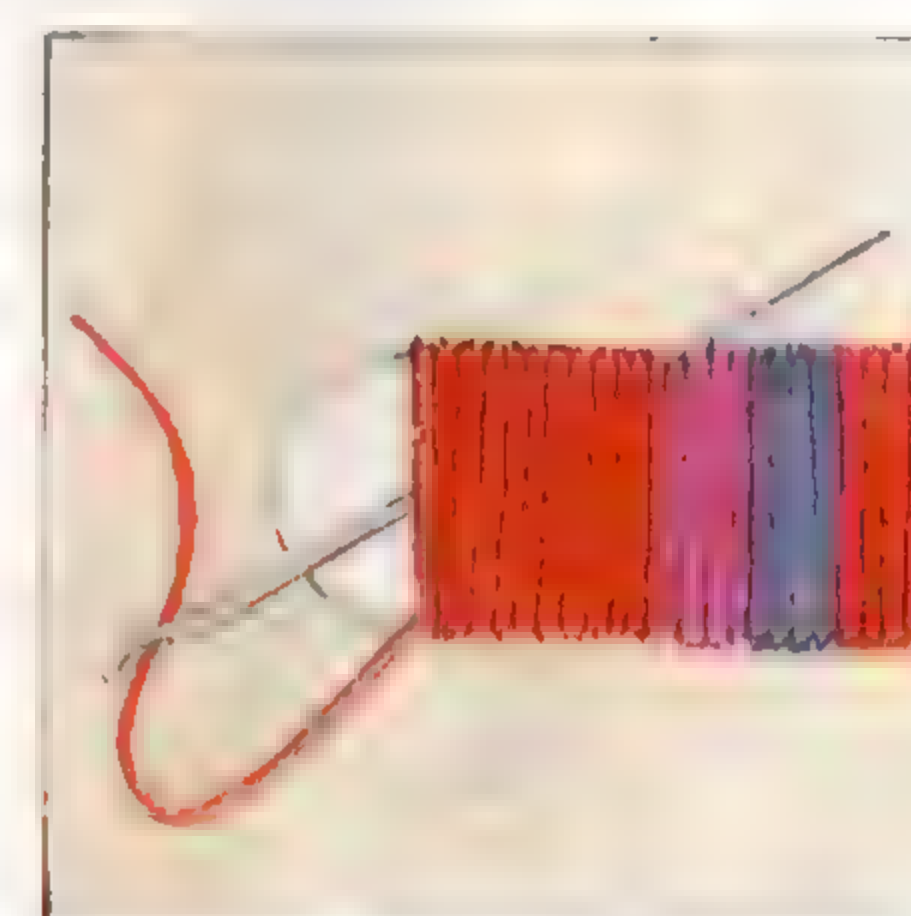
**3** Take the end of the thread and press 1 inch onto the sticky tape. This "anchor" will keep the thread in place when you start wrapping it around the headband.



**4** Wrap the thread around the headband, starting at the edge of the first piece of tape. Cover the 1-inch "anchor" piece. As you wrap, each "round" should be right next to the one before it. Peel off the backing from each piece of tape as you come to it.



**5** To change colors, cut the thread, leaving about a half inch at the end. Press this end onto the tape. Repeat Step 3 to begin a new color. As you wrap, make sure the first color doesn't show through the next color.



**6** To finish, cut the thread. Thread it through the needle and pull it under 10 "rounds" on the underside of the headband. Snip the thread close to the headband. Dab glue on the underside of both ends of the headband to hold the thread in place.

*Crafts by  
Sally Seamans*





Use this yarn-wrapping technique to make bracelets, too. You'll need bendable strips of metal called bracelet "blanks," available at craft stores. Cover the bracelet blanks with double-sided tape and wrap them up, just like the headbands.



The headband on the left was made with nubby bouclé (boo-CLAY) yarn, available at fabric shops. To make the colorful belt that borders this page, put double-sided tape on cotton clothesline and wrap it up!



# A Season of Surprises

Make holiday **magic** with surprises that are **big** or very, very **small**.  
Surprises can be **simple** or **silly**, but they're sure to be **fun** for all!

## Hair ball

Give a ball of surprises  
to a friend who loves  
styling hair!

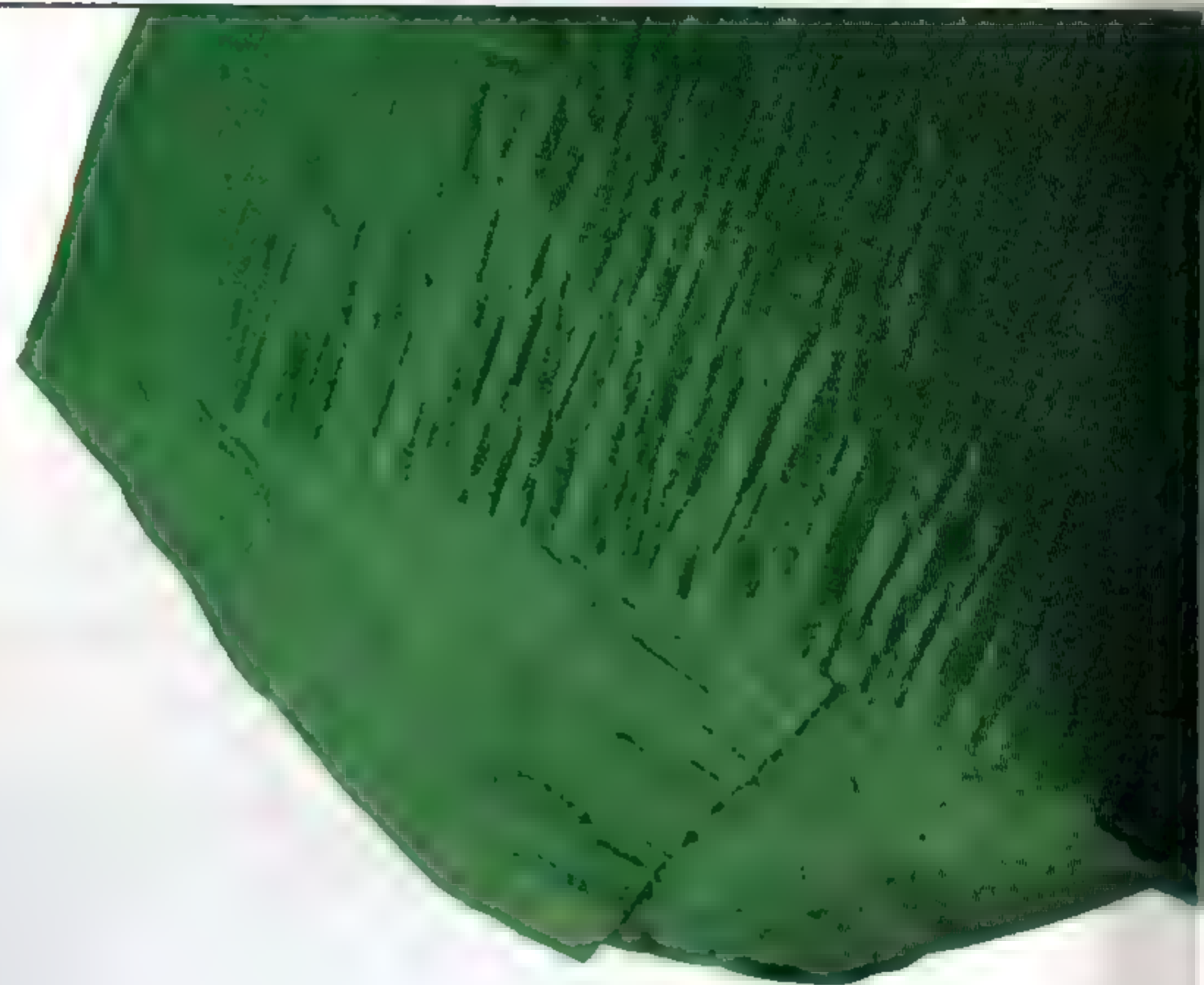


## Make a Surprise Ball

These gifts *really* are as much  
fun to give as they are to get!

You will need:

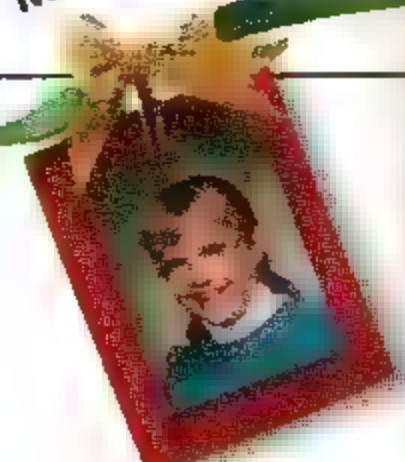
- 1 or 2 rolls of crepe-paper streamers
- About 10 small surprises. This number can vary, depending on how big you want the ball to be! A craft store or a store where everything costs a dollar will give you ideas.
- Clear tape, scissors









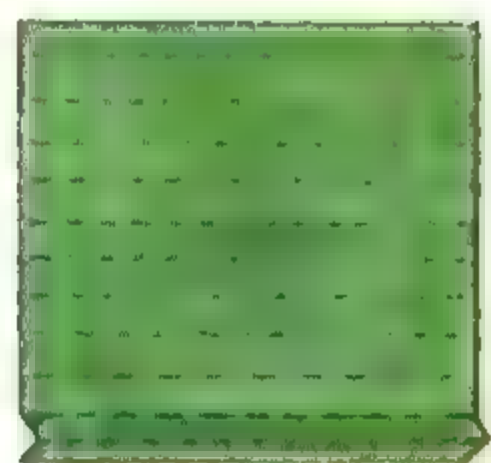


Turn simple stuff into **great** surprises!

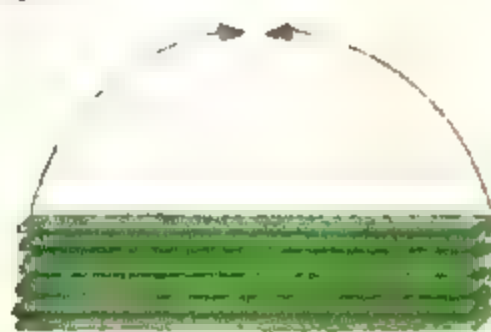
## Pretty pleats



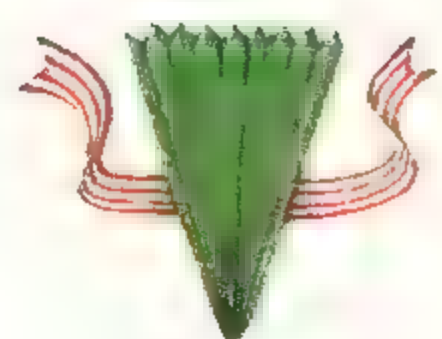
Fold some fun into your holiday meal with this napkin idea. You can use either cloth or paper napkins.



**1** Start with a flat, unfolded napkin. Begin at the bottom edge and fold the napkin in an accordion fold—just like you'd fold a paper fan.



**2** Hold the ends of the folded napkin in each hand. Bring both ends together, folding the napkin in half.



**3** Tie a ribbon around the middle of the napkin or put it into a napkin ring. Fan out the pretty pleats on your plate.

"Every year we have a little tree for my dog and me because we are small."

Sarah Hurwitz  
Age 11, Phoenix, Arizona



Trim an **itty-bitty** tree. Whip up  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Ivory soap flakes and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water so it looks like thick pudding. Spread it on the ends of the tree branches with an old toothbrush. Add glitter to the soap for extra sparkle. Let dry. Make a tree skirt from wrapping paper and decorate the tree with candy, stars cut from shiny paper, and beads. Wrapped matchboxes hold teeny-tiny gifts!



Illustrations: Judy Pelikan





## Make a special garland of friends!

Cut felt shapes and glue your friends' pictures to them. With a marker, write the date and your friends' names on the backs. Cut a slit at the top of each shape and string a ribbon through it. Tie the shapes to a long ribbon, and use it to trim your tree! Add to the garland each year.



"My great-grandfather started a family tradition of wrapping presents in brown paper bags instead of wrapping paper. The **best present** is always wrapped in a brown paper bag!"

*Allison Beringer*  
Age 11, Rocky Hill,  
Connecticut

Give a **big kiss!**  
Wrap your gift in tissue paper and put it in a clean margarine tub. Set the tub into the center of a sheet of foil. Put some tissue paper around the base of the margarine tub to get your kiss "fat" enough. Gather the corners of the foil together and twist into the shape of a candy kiss. Don't forget to twist in a paper message at the top!

Present your homemade cookies on a red-and-white **peppermint** plate. You'll need 2 sturdy white paper plates, red paper, scissors and glue, clear cellophane wrap, and red ribbon. Cut peppermint swirls from the paper and glue them to the bottom

of one plate. Put your cookies onto the undecorated plate. Put the decorated plate on top. Wrap with cellophane. Tie each end with a red bow. It's a sweet-looking treat!





This **silly** game of hide-and-seek has been a tradition for many American families since the 1850s!



"Every year we hang a pickle ornament on the tree. On Christmas Eve, Santa hides the pickle on the tree and leaves an extra present for whoever finds the pickle first!"

*Breta Hill*  
Age 12, Tulsa, Oklahoma



"My mom was born in Iceland. Every Christmas in Iceland they put an almond in rice pudding. Whoever gets the almond wins a gift and is blessed with good luck the following year!"

*Sally Bishop*  
Age 11, Orleans, Nebraska



Hide **secret** treasure. Put an almond into one cupcake before you bake the whole batch. Have a gift for the person who finds it!

Find a pickle. Tell a story. Hide some treasure. Plan a



"We have a party where everyone brings a wrapped ornament. We tell a story. Every time you hear the word *right*, you pass your gift to the right. Every time the story says *left*, you pass it to the left. You keep the gift you're left with at the end of the story. It's very fun!"

*Ashley Allen*  
Age 11, Brigham City, Utah

Make up a **fun** "right" and "left" story. Here's part of Ashley's tale:

Mrs. Claus was lifting packages **right** and **left** into the sleigh when she remembered she'd **left** a package inside because it wasn't quite **right**. She rushed to get the doll who now looked just **right**!

When she got back to the sleigh, Santa was **right** there with his reindeer. He'd be **right** on time if he **left** just then. Mrs. Claus kissed him on the **right** cheek and said, "Hurry **right** back! I hope you give the **right** present to each child. And there better not be any **left**!"







"My family reads *The Polar Express* on Christmas Eve. We go around the table so everyone reads a page. Every time we hear the word *bell*, we ring our bells. Every time we hear the word *train*, we blow a train whistle. We have had this tradition for the last seven years."

*Beth Bennett*  
Age 12, Issaquah,  
Washington



Here are some other **magical** tales about the holidays:  
*The Gift of the Magi*,  
by O. Henry  
*The Glass Angels*,  
by Susan Hill

**surprising** activity and get everybody in on the **fun!**



## Surprise your mom and dad!

Help out! Babysit your siblings. Shovel the sidewalk. Make the hectic holiday season easier for everyone!

## Surprise us!

Send us an ornament you've made that reflects the holiday you celebrate. We'll feature some of them in *American Girl* next year. Send your creations by December 31 to:  
**American Girl Holiday**  
8400 Fairway Place  
Middleton, WI 53562  
Unfortunately, we can't return any ornaments. ★



# The Greatest Gifts

By Harriet Brown and Cathryn Harding

They weren't wrapped in shiny paper or tied with fancy bows. Yet the gifts these girls gave were the greatest ones of all.

## The gift of Understanding

The colorful drawings taped to Kristen Estopare's refrigerator do more than brighten the kitchen. They remind her of the special people who drew them—the foster children who have lived with her family in Shawnee, Kansas. “I want to remember them,” says Kristen, 13. “They’re special to me.”

Kristen and her brother help their mom care for up to three foster children at a

time. It's not easy. Kristen bathes and diapers the babies. For a while she shared a room with a four-year-old girl and often had to comfort her in the middle of the night. “She got scared a lot, so I'd calm her down,” says Kristen.

A little understanding and care is just what the foster children need. And the hard work is worth it, says Kristen. “I'm helping them,” she explains. “And they need love.”



Kristen Estopare's refrigerator is a gallery of memories.

Photo: Hollis Officer



# The gift of Friendship

Quinn Petry doesn't have a grandfather. But she does have a special friend—a man named Ellie Crossman.

Quinn used to see the older man around Westborough, Massachusetts, with his dog. She didn't know his name, but she looked forward to talking to him and playing with his greyhound, Iris. Then one day the man disappeared. "I was worried that he died," says ten-year-old Quinn. Eventually she tracked him down in a nursing home, where he was recovering from foot surgery.


Quinn started visiting Mr. Crossman in the nursing home, and the friendship continued after he recovered. Quinn bought Mr. Crossman a Father's Day card and asked him to be her honorary grandfather. Last December, she filled Christmas stockings for both him and Iris—who loved her candy-cane bone! At Easter, Mr. Crossman sent Quinn flowers. The card said, "To my best friend."

Quinn's gift of friendship has meant a lot to Mr. Crossman—and to her. "I feel good that I've helped someone," she says. "Mr. Crossman will always be a part of me."

Quinn Petry and Mr. Crossman with Iris, the dog that helped launch their friendship.





A group of five Girl Scouts are working on a wooden bridge in a forest. One girl in the foreground is using a shovel to clear debris. Another girl is standing on the bridge, and two others are on the ground. The background is a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

Troop 8000 puts some muscle into cleaning up the Salmon River Trail. From left: Cristy Melbourne, Sarah Crossley, Jessica Hey, Andrea Kimball, and Sarah Ashland.

## The gift of **Caring**

For the fifth-graders in Girl Scout Troop 8000 in Gresham, Oregon, the gift of caring means carrying garbage.

The scouts have adopted two and a half miles of the Salmon River Trail in the Mount Hood National Forest. Three times a year they spend a day in the woods, taking care of the trail.

"We carry out a lot of trash—plastic bags, cigarette packages, all sorts of stuff," says Sarah Hendrickson, 10. The girls shovel ashes out of fire pits, clean campsites,

and scrape pine needles out of the trail's seven cedar bridges, so the bridges don't rot.

By caring *for* the trail, they've learned to care *about* it—and about the environment. And that brings its own rewards.

"It makes us feel like we own the trail," explains Sarah Ashland, 10.

Sarah Hendrickson agrees. "I'm helping the environment by making it a better place for other people to be," she says. "That makes *me* feel good, too."



# The gift of Respect

Once a week all winter long, girls from the Tohono O'odham (toh-HO-no o-O-dahm) Indian nation in Arizona gather to play *toka* (TOCK-a), a lively sport a lot like field hockey. Toka is great exercise—and a way for these girls to show respect for all the Tohono O'odham women who have played the sport before them.

Native American women played toka for hundreds of years, using sticks to hit and slap at an *ola*, a kind of ball. In the 1940s the game disappeared. But it was rediscovered in 1977 by a Tohono O'odham woman named Verna Morrow.

Now about 150 girls compete in a toka league. One of their team T-shirts shows Tohono O'odham women of long ago with toka sticks—a reminder that toka has been part of their heritage for generations. Many of the girls have mothers and grandmothers who once played the game. Some of these older women coach the girls today. "Toka makes me feel connected to my ancestors, because they used to play it a long time ago," explains Sheila Juan, 11.

"Toka is our tradition," agrees April Morrow, 13. "We're very proud of it."

Photo: David Schmidt



In front, from left: Leilonna Francisco, Stacey and Ashley Gregorio, and Ursula Enos. The girls learned the tradition of *toka* from their mothers, grandmothers, and aunts.

4. Who founded Snowflake, Arizona?

Photo: Neal Davis



Carriann Shantz and Mallory Ashe share a story with their friends Tonya Manganero, Richard Hosey, and Michael Kissell.

# The gift of Sharing

Most kids spend recess goofing around or playing outside. But last year, Mallory Ashe, Carriann Shantz, and some of their third-grade friends passed up the playground to share their time and talents with kids in their grade school's special-education classroom.

It started when the girls ate lunch next to the special-education students at their Lockport, New York, school. "They were nice to us, and we wanted to teach them and make friends with them," says Mallory, 9. The

girls set aside several recesses a week to read to the class, help teach them the alphabet, and help them learn to write their names. They also made the students bookmarks and necklaces as presents.

The girls weren't bothered when other kids teased them about their new pals. While sharing with their adopted classmates, the girls learned a few things, too. "They taught us how to be kinder to everyone," says Carriann, 9. "When we left, they'd wave. It was really nice."



# The gift of Laughter

When Nicolette Beck was younger, she would do silly imitations of TV announcers to make her family laugh. When her mom told her about a stand-up comedy class for kids, Nikki knew it was no joke—she signed right up!

The nine-year-old from Malibu, California, now performs a five-minute routine at a comedy club once a month. She jokes about current events, her dad's singing, and anything else she thinks is funny. Curly-haired Nikki even pokes fun at herself. "People say my baby sister is so soft, sweet, and pretty," she says. She pauses and throws up her hands. "What am I . . . a Brillo pad?"

"People come to hear me because they're stressed out," she says. "Comedy calms them down. It starts them laughing." And Nikki has as much fun as the audience. "Except if someone doesn't get the joke," she says. "The rest of the time, it's wonderful." ★

Nikki Beck's stand-up routine gets people laughing.



1928

# Francie

By Ellen Howard

Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter

*Marguerite hadn't made a single friend in the new town.  
Then the Hanisians moved in, and she met Francie.*

**M**y sister Marguerite acted funny for a long time after we moved to California—quiet and unhappy, and sometimes even mad. I knew she hadn't wanted to leave Oregon, but then neither had I—and I hadn't changed. Sometimes I wondered if Marguerite felt shy among our new neighbors, but that was hard to believe. After all, I thought, Marguerite was everything anyone

could ever want to be—pretty and smart and talented. . . . How could a person like Marguerite be shy? But after more than half a year, she hadn't made any friends.

Then the Hanisians moved in across the street, and Marguerite started acting more like her old self. She began to take an interest in things again. Mostly she began to take an interest in Francie.



From the book *Circle of Giving*



**T**he neighbors called Francie “the little paralyzed girl.”

“Poor little paralyzed girl,” we heard our neighbor Mrs. Mendenhall tell Mother. “What a trial for the mother.”

“She ought to be in an institution,” said Mrs. Timothy.

Now I know that Francie was not really paralyzed at all. She had cerebral palsy, which means she could not control her muscles because,

before she was born, her brain had been hurt somehow.

But at first we did not think about the fact she was handicapped. To us, Francie was simply, horribly, fascinatingly *different* from everyone we knew.

It was the Saturday after the Hanisians moved onto our street that we first saw Francie scooting down the sidewalk in front of her house in a walker someone had made for her—an old bicycle seat in a frame with wheels. She was strapped to the seat and supported by the frame. Her pitifully thin legs propelled her along the walk with jerking kicks. Her head seemed too large for her body, and lolled to one side on a spindly neck. Her arms and legs were in constant, spastic motion.

We stood, Marguerite and I, clutching each other by the hand, and stared until our mother called us in.

“I’m ashamed of you,” she said. “Just standing there gawking at that poor unfortunate child. How would you feel if you were she?”

How would *we* feel? It had not occurred to me the creature could feel at all. Was she like me

inside, even though on the outside she was so dreadfully different? I wished Mother would finish her lecture, so we could go play and forget the peculiar girl.

But Marguerite would not stop talking about Francie. What was wrong with her, she wanted to

know. Could she walk? Could she talk? What did it feel like to be crippled?

“I don’t know much about her, Marguerite,” Mother said. “I hear she was

born afflicted. It may be she isn’t bright. But all people, crippled or whole, have the same emotions. We all feel hurt or happiness, no matter the condition of our brains or bodies.”

Marguerite nodded thoughtfully.

“Why not try to get to know her?” Mother suggested. Her voice was gentle, and she looked hard at Marguerite. “That poor little girl is going to have an even harder time than you making friends in a new neighborhood.”

Marguerite nodded again, and there was a funny look on her face—a little, I thought, as though she felt like crying.

And so it was decided. Marguerite and I were to be Francie Hanisian’s friends.

**H**ow do you do,” Mrs. Hanisian said the first day we went to visit Francie. “Please come in.”

Marguerite and I jostled against each other as we tripped over the doorstep in our nervousness.

Mrs. Hanisian led us down a hall. “Francie,” I heard her say, “some neighbor girls have come to play with you—Marguerite and Jeannie Sloan from across the street.”

“I’m ashamed of you,”  
Mother said. “Just standing  
there gawking at that poor  
unfortunate child.”





Marguerite and I peered into the room. Francie was in a wheelchair by the window. She bounced against the straps that held her in and made strange, excited sounds.

"She'll calm down in a moment," Mrs. Hanisian said. "Please don't be afraid. She's just glad to see you."

I tried not to stare, but there seemed nowhere else to look except at the contorted figure in the wheelchair. *What are we going to do with her?* I thought. I looked to Marguerite for help. But Marguerite's lower lip was trembling.

"Can we take Francie for a walk?" I blurted out, hardly knowing where the idea had come from.

"I think that would be a fine thing to do," Mrs. Hanisian said.

"We can pretend we're nurses," I told Marguerite as we wheeled the chair down the sidewalk. Walking behind Francie, where we didn't have to look at her, I felt much better.

"She can be the patient," I said.

In the chair in front of us, Francie flailed and made noises. I was glad there were no other kids in sight.

Marguerite was quiet. She had not cried, as I had feared, but I could tell she was upset. "I think she's trying to say something," Marguerite whispered.

"Naw," I said. "She can't talk."

"Shh!" Marguerite hissed. "She'll hear you."

"Marg, she can't understand what we say. You can tell. Just look at her."

"Listen," Marguerite whispered. She walked around to kneel before Francie's chair.

Francie's crooked little hands were waving in the air. She lunged toward Marguerite, mouthing garbled sounds. I watched, amazed, as Marguerite reached out and grabbed Francie's chin, holding the bobbing head still. Francie's whole body seemed to quiet. She grunted softly,



and Marguerite looked up at me in wonder.

"She's trying to tell us something," she said.  
"I know she is."

**W**e spent a lot of time at the Hanisians' house that summer. From the day Marguerite took Francie's chin in her hand and first looked into her eyes, something special happened to Francie every time she saw Marguerite. She just sort of glowed: she followed Marguerite with her eyes and would get still when Marguerite spoke, as if everything Marguerite said was important.

It was Marguerite who learned that Francie could nod her head "yes" and "no" in answer to our questions. Before long, Marguerite claimed she could understand some of what she insisted Francie was trying to say.

"I worry about Marguerite," I heard Mother tell Daddy one day near the end of summer. "She spends all her time with the little Hanisian girl and never plays with the other children."

"She never played with them before," said Daddy. "If you ask me, one friend is better than none.

Give her time. She acts happier than I've seen her since we moved from Oregon."

It was true. After Francie Hanisian moved into our neighborhood, Marguerite's eyes began to sparkle, and she began to laugh again.

But I didn't have the patience for the slow word games Marguerite played with Francie. Often, when they were busy, I played with the other kids, and I felt embarrassed when Sammy

Benjamin jeered, "Where's your sister? Playing with the idjit again!"

"Birds of a feather flock together," mocked Alice Jane Dooley, and the other kids laughed.

One day in late summer, Mrs. Hanisian brought lemonade and cookies out to us in the yard. Marguerite and Francie and I had been "camping" in a tent made of blankets hung over the clothesline.

"I don't suppose Francie can go to school," Marguerite said.

"No, I'm afraid not," said Mrs. Hanisian.

"Is that why Francie can't read and write?" Marguerite asked.

"Francie couldn't write in any case," Mrs. Hanisian said gently, pausing a moment to smooth Francie's wild, dark hair. "She can't control her hands well enough. As for reading . . ."

"She loves stories," said Marguerite. "I thought—"

"I really don't think so, dear," said Mrs. Hanisian. "We've gotten to know what she means

when she makes certain noises or gestures, but . . ." Her voice trailed off. Then she gave herself a little shake and picked up the tray. "You'll just have to

come over sometimes after school to read to her. She loves the attention."

"Francie understands," said Marguerite, looking fierce. "I know she does."

Mrs. Hanisian's mouth smiled at us, but her eyes were sad.

"We'll come over real often," Marguerite said. "Only . . ." She had that funny look in her eyes. I had a feeling she wasn't going to let it go at that.

**"Francie understands," said Marguerite, looking fierce.  
"I know she does."**





The first day of school, Marguerite came home with an armful of books—an ABC and a primary reader, even some flash cards.

“Why do we need them?” I asked. “We already *know* how to read.”

“But Francie doesn’t,” said Marguerite triumphantly, “and *we’re* gonna teach her.”

Only, in the end, it was Marguerite who did the teaching.

Teaching Francie wasn’t easy. I wasn’t sure she understood. I got bored, and the other girls were always doing something fun after school.

“You go on, Jeannie,” Marguerite would say. “Francie’s *expecting* me.”

“What do you find to do with Francie every day?” Mother asked her.

“I *told* you, Mother. I’m teaching her to read and write.”

A worried frown creased Mother’s forehead.

“Oh, *that*,” Mother said.

Before I knew it, Halloween and Thanksgiving were over, and Christmas was on its way.

“Could we invite the Hanisians for Christmas?” Marguerite asked.

“That’s a wonderful idea,” Daddy said, “and it gives me an even better one. Let’s invite *all* the neighbors for Christmas Eve. We could draw names for gifts.”

That’s how it happened that our Christmas that year included every family on our block. Everybody, and especially the Hanisians.

The night of the party, the Hanisians were the last to arrive. The thin blue dress Francie wore only emphasized her twisted little back. She was grinning her lopsided grin and jumping and lunging in her chair. We girls had gathered in the bedroom. In the quiet that fell when Francie was wheeled in, her voice sounded weird and garbled,

5. Where did Felicity hide her heavy shoes?



like some strange caged bird, crying to be free.

"I didn't know *she* was invited," I heard someone whisper behind me, and I felt my ears burn.

"Hey!" yelled Francie, grinning, and I was caught by the joy in her eyes.

Marguerite got up from her chair. She was careful not to look at anyone but Francie. "Hi, Francie," she said, and I was amazed to hear her voice sound as calm as if she were walking into Francie's room alone.

Little Delores Benjamin's eyes were big, staring at the wheels on Francie's chair. "Could she run over me?" she asked in a worried voice.

Mrs. Hanisian bent down. "There are brakes," she said. "See?"

"I want a ride," yelled Joycie, the littlest Dooley girl. "I want a ride!"

Delores whirled around. "Me, too!" she cried. "Me, too!" I looked at Francie. Her head was nodding up and down.

In a moment we had pillowed Francie in a place of honor on the bed, and Joycie had climbed into the wheelchair and was demanding, "Push me!"

One of her big sisters pushed Joycie out into the hall where there was more room, and the other girls crowded to the doorway to watch. But Louise Dooley came back to the bed where Marguerite and I sat with Francie.

"That was kind of nice of her," Louise muttered, jerking her head toward Francie but not looking at her. "Looked like she knew what the kids wanted to do and sort of said O.K."

"Of course she knew," said Marguerite. "Honestly, Louise Dooley, just because you can't understand Francie doesn't mean she can't understand you."

"Prih-dee," said Francie, reaching out to touch Louise's ruffled skirt.

"What's she saying?" said Louise.

"Listen," said Marguerite.

"Prih-dee, prih-dee," said Francie.

Louise tilted her head and looked at Francie for the first time.

"Pretty?" she said. "Is she saying *pretty*?"

"Hey," I said. "You're as good as Marguerite."

"I didn't know *she* was invited," I heard someone whisper behind me.

It wasn't ten minutes before all the girls were crowded around Francie and Marguerite and me on the bed. Suddenly,

everyone was laughing and talking just like before Francie came, only now she was right in the middle of it, jouncing a little, her hair slipping out of its blue bow, her blue eyes shining, happy and bright.

It was late by the time we kids had carried all the plates and silver to the kitchen and the mothers had washed them. "Is it time?" I asked, eyeing the pile of gifts that had grown beneath the tree as our guests arrived.

Mother caught Daddy's eye and nodded significantly.

"Neighbors," he said in his big, deep voice. "Thank you for coming to the first annual Stanley Avenue Christmas Eve Party. Now it's time for the presents."

One by one, Daddy drew packages from under the tree and read aloud the names of the recipients. When my name was called, I was handed a package wrapped in silver gilt—my first cologne. Sammy Benjamin got some sheet music. Quite a few people got handkerchiefs. Alice Jane Dooley liked the jacks I gave her.









"Here's an interesting one," said Daddy at last. The gift was wrapped in bright holly-printed paper. "To Momma from Francie," he read.

Mrs. Hanisian was looking puzzled. "From Francie?" she said. She looked at Francie, and Francie grinned, bouncing in her chair the way she did when she was excited. People looked over curiously as Mrs. Hanisian pulled the wrapping away to reveal a paper, rolled as Sammy's sheet music had been. Slowly she began to unroll the paper. I saw that Marguerite was gazing at her face as though hypnotized.

"Fra-zee made," Francie was yelling. "Fra-zee made for Ma-ma."

Mrs. Hanisian looked up from the paper, dazed. "What in the world?" she said.

"Francie did it herself," Marguerite said. "I helped her wrap it and wrote the tag, but Francie did the rest all by herself. She's been practicing every day. She wanted it to be a surprise."

Mrs. Hanisian looked at Marguerite as though she didn't understand. "Did it herself?" she said. She looked at Francie. "Francie, you did this yourself?"

Francie was bobbing her head as hard as she could. Her face was shining, and her eyes were full of pride.

"What did Francie make?" everyone was asking.

Mrs. Hanisian rose from her chair, put her arms around Francie, and whispered into her ear. Then she turned and handed the paper to Marguerite. "Show everyone, Marguerite. Show everyone what Francie can do, when a friend cares enough to teach her how." She knelt before the wheelchair and pulled Francie into her arms, holding her tight while tears streamed down her cheeks.

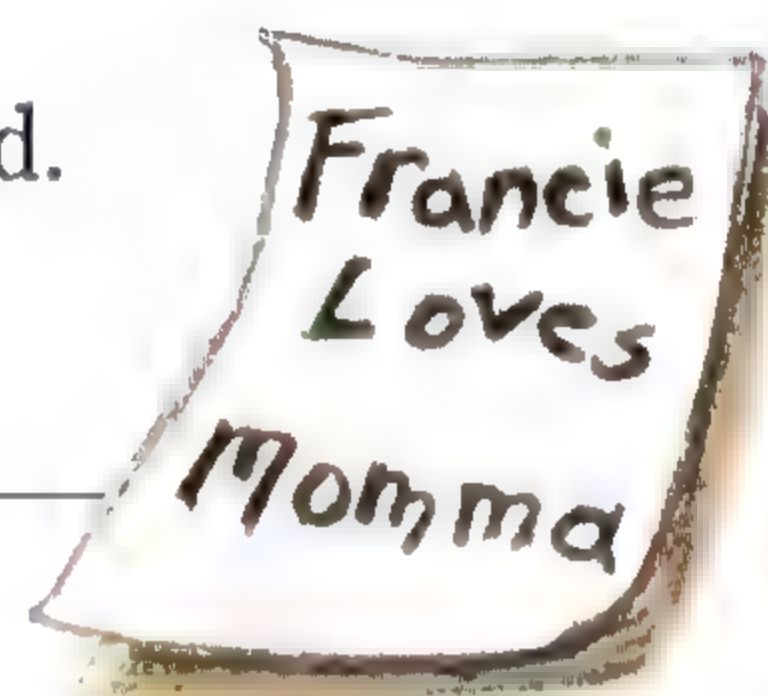
The room had grown so still, I could hear the tick of the clock. Marguerite turned the paper so everyone could see. "It's just that Francie wanted to learn to read and write like the rest of us kids," she said, her voice trembling, "so I've been teaching her how. That's all."

Blotched and wavery, the crooked black letters painted on the paper were large enough for everyone to read.

"Francie loves Momma," they said.

Meet the Author

**Ellen Howard**



When I was a girl, my mother and my aunt used to tell me stories about a childhood friend of theirs who had cerebral

palsy. My aunt had been the first person who really understood and talked with her. Out of those stories came the story you just read.

Other books by Ellen Howard include *Her Own Song*, *Gillyflower*, *Sister*, *Edith Herself*, and *The Tower Room*.



# Laura

*For girls like Francie, the worst part of having cerebral palsy was how others treated them. Things are different for Laura today.*

Ten-year-old Laura Lassiter from Charlotte, North Carolina, is a typical American girl. She goes to school, writes poems, and loves cats. She also has cerebral palsy, or CP, like Francie in the story on page 35. But her life is very different from Francie's.

In Francie's time, people thought that just because kids with CP couldn't walk or talk like everyone else, they couldn't think or feel, either. Now we know better. CP does *not* make you mentally retarded. Many people with CP are as smart as anyone else.

People with CP do often have trouble walking, talking, or using their hands. Their brains were damaged when they were very young, so their muscles don't get the right signals about how to move.

Laura loves playing on a Little League team for kids with disabilities.



For Laura, CP affects the muscles in her legs the most. She uses a walker, but getting around is hard work. Still, Laura doesn't let CP stop her. She and her friend Elizabeth love going to baseball games together!

The one thing Laura would hate is if someone didn't want to be her friend because she has CP. "That would really upset me," she says. Most of the time, though, people go out of their way to include her. One summer, twelve people in an Outward Bound group helped Laura get all the way up a mountain, so she could enjoy the view.

Laura tackles problems by focusing on what she can do—not what she can't do. "You should keep going even though you have problems," she says. "What keeps me going is my courage." ★

## Making Friends

Here are answers to questions you might have about getting to know girls with disabilities.

**Is it O.K. to ask someone about her disability?**

Sure. It's better to ask nicely than stare or point.

**What if I can't understand her when she talks?**

Chances are, even if you don't understand her, she understands you just fine. It's O.K. to ask her to

repeat what she said. But don't talk about her as if she isn't there.

**Should I feel sorry for her?**

Definitely not! She just wants the same chances as everyone else. As one girl with CP wrote: "Please don't feel sorry for me, because I am very happy."



# The Giggle Gang



## Turkey Test

The crazy girls from the Giggle Gang are ready for a delectable dinner. Study this scene

for one minute. Then test your memory by answering the questions on page 46.



## AG Code

Use the decoder below to unscramble this issue's secret message. Look for other coded messages in future issues!



└ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ > ┐ < ┐ ┐ ┐  
A T u r k e y I i p:

┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ < ┐  
D o n ' t g o b b l e

< ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐  
y o u r F o o d!

All answers on page 46.

baaaaaad." Rachel L. Stevenson

What do you get when you cross a chicken with a bell? An alarm cluck.

Amy DeRemer

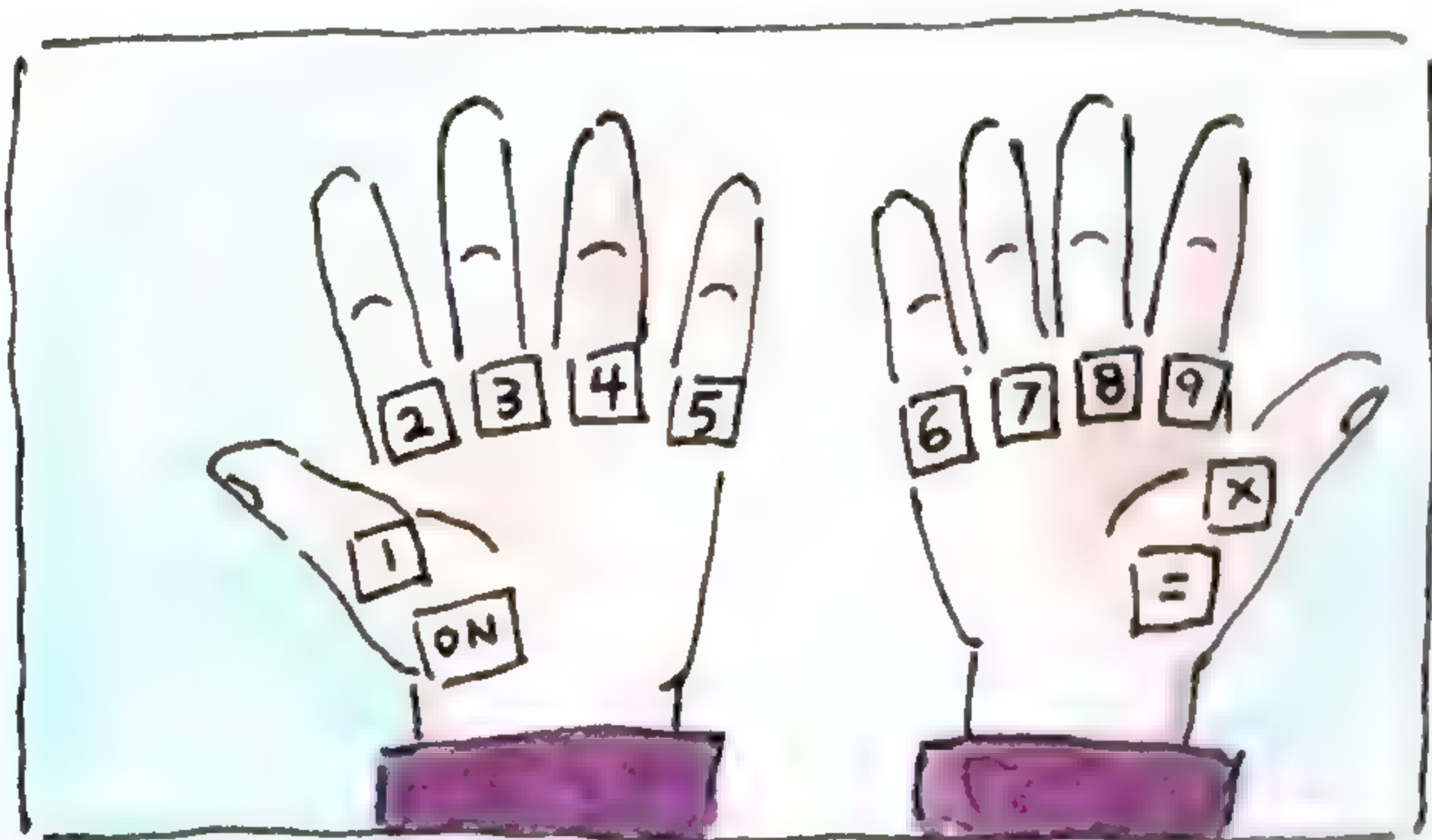
Age 10, Naples, Florida

Age 9, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

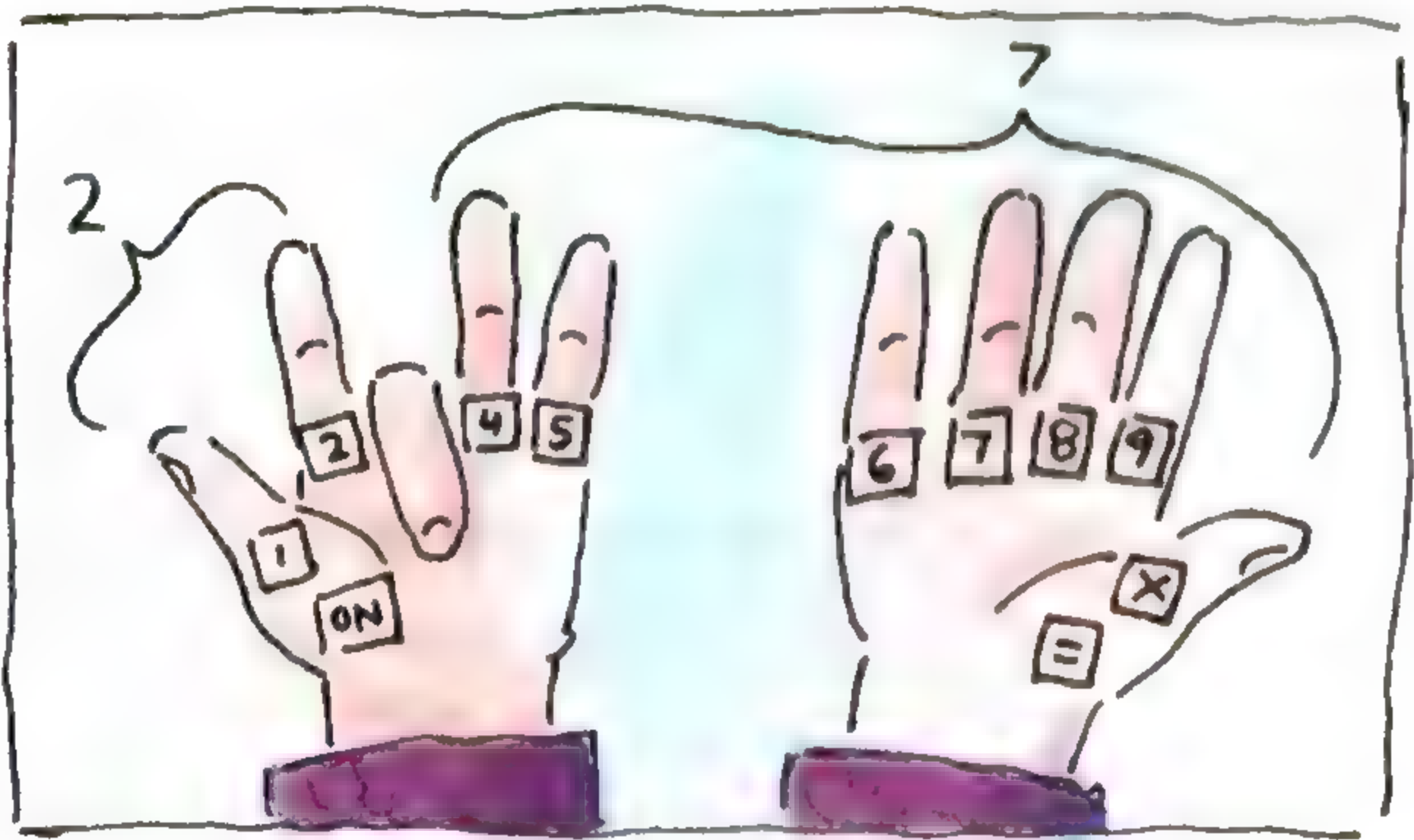


# Finger Calculator

This trick magically turns your hands into a calculator that can multiply by nine. Here's how: First, draw calculator buttons on your hands, like those shown below.



Then tell a friend she can multiply a single-digit number by nine by pressing the buttons on your hands. For example, try nine times three. Have your friend press **ON**, then the buttons for **9**, **x**, and **3**. After she presses the **=** button, lower the finger that was multiplied by nine.



The fingers left standing tell the answer! There are **2** fingers standing to the left of the finger that's down, and **7** fingers standing to the right. **9 x 3 = 27!**

# On the Spot

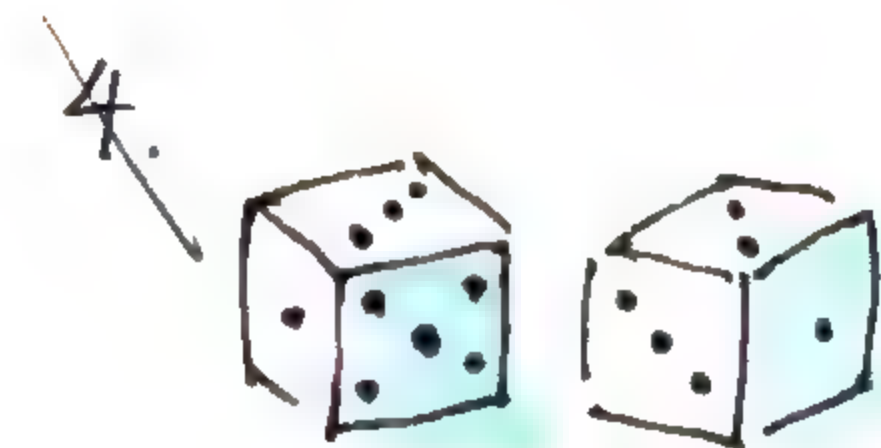
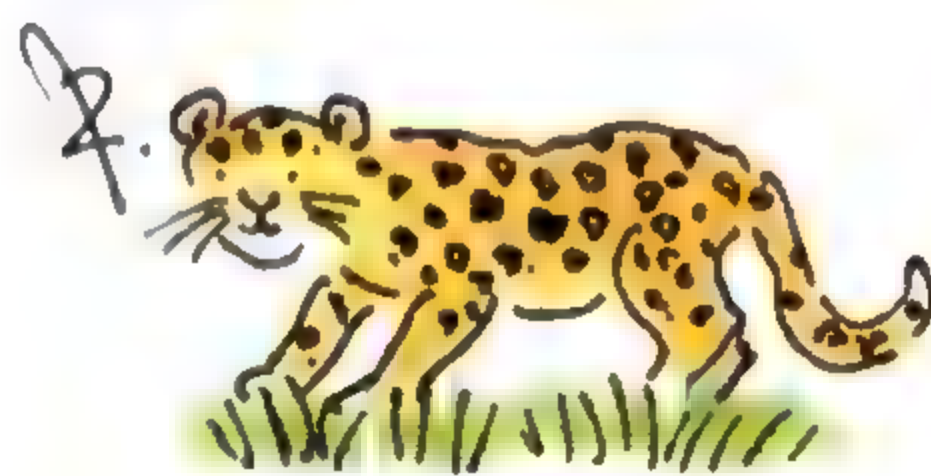
All the answers to this crossword puzzle are things that have spots.



Puzzle: Sherry Timberman

Across

Down



What do you call a scared flower arranger? A petrified florist.

Laura Livesay  
Age 13, Spencerville, Indiana

What's green and crawls on all fours? A Girl

Scout who dropped her cookies. Brook Bassett  
Age 11, Livingston, Texas

What do you get when you cross two chickens and two bombs? A chicka-chicka boom-boom!

Lauren Adams  
Age 10, Knoxville, Tennessee



# The Giggle Gang

## Card Hunt

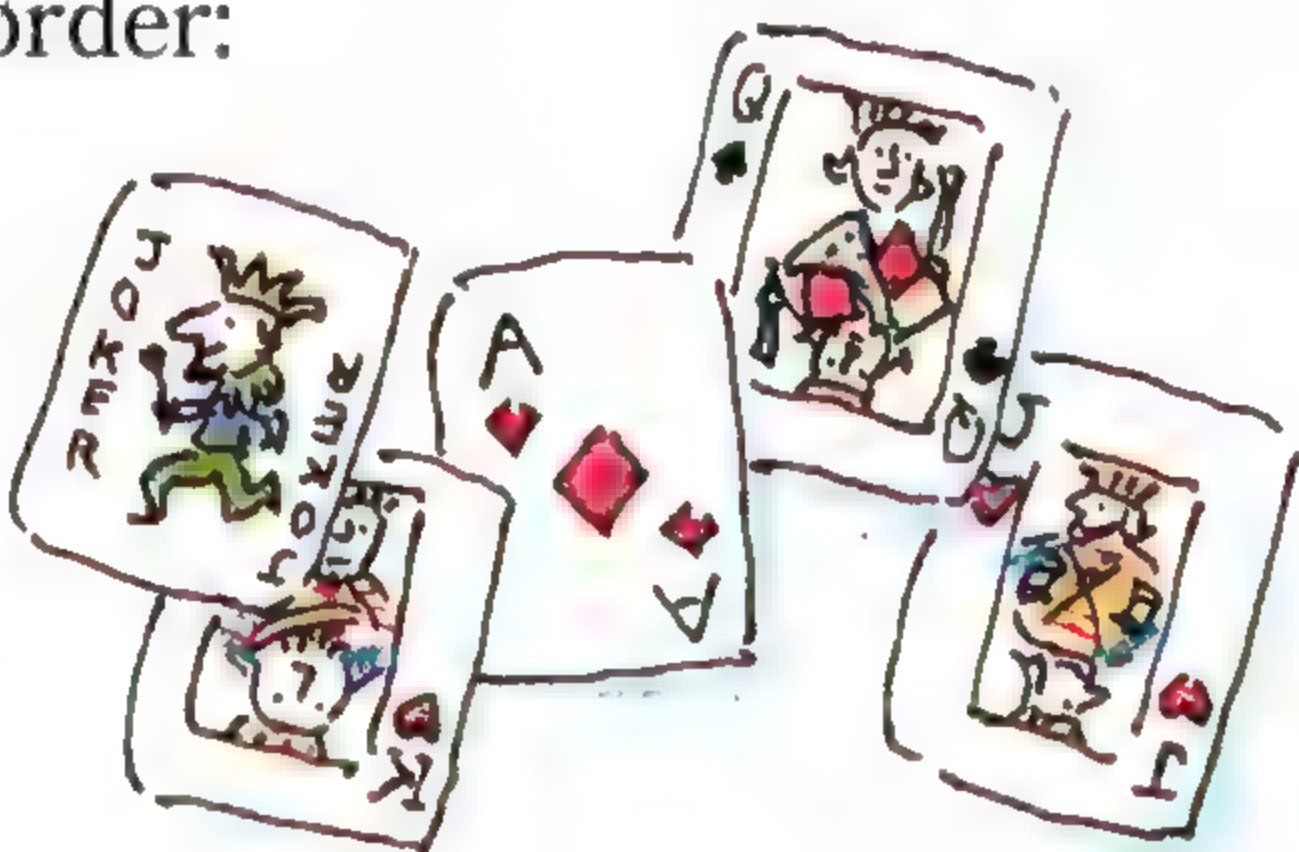
Sarah Germann, age 13, sent us this quick and crazy card game. "It's fun to play at family get-togethers," writes Sarah.



Just follow these directions. *Sarah Germann*

You need two decks of playing cards and ten people. The goal is to find the following cards, in this order:

joker  
king of hearts  
ace of diamonds  
queen of spades  
jack of hearts



Form two lines with five players on a side. The first player on each team gets a deck of cards. At the word *Go*, she begins looking for a joker, moving cards from the



top of the deck to the bottom. When she finds a joker, she removes the card and passes her deck to the next person. That player begins looking for the king of hearts as quickly as she can.

The game continues, with each person looking for a card in the order listed above. The team to collect all the cards first wins!

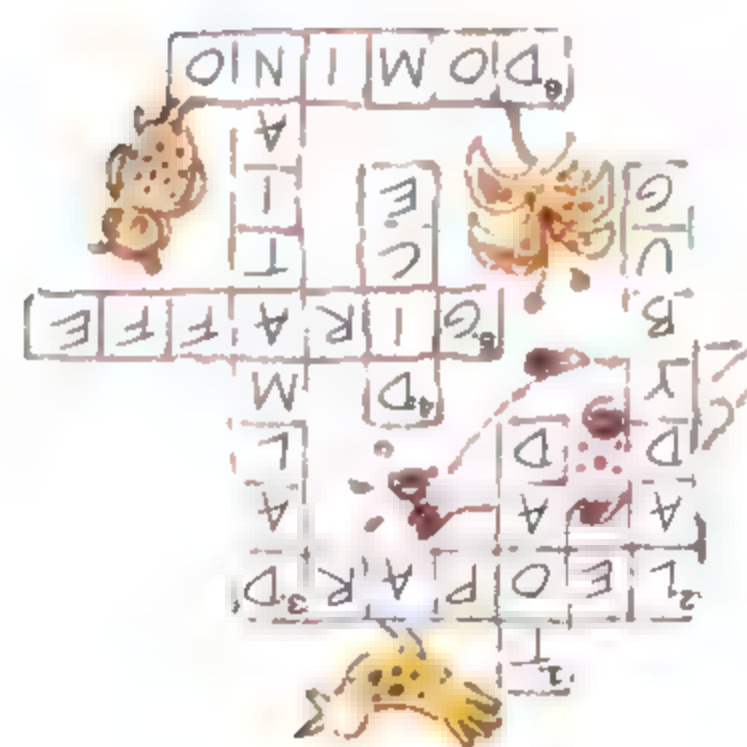


## Turkey Test

Remember the cartoon on page 44? Answer these questions about what you saw:

1. The girl with the football has what number on her jersey? *20*
2. What's outside the window? *turkey*
3. Name the four animals in the room. *cat, dog, bird, turkey*
4. Who has the butter dish? *cat*
5. What does the picture on the wall say? *home Sweet home*
6. Does the girl with the turkey have straight or curly hair? *curly*
7. What book is one girl reading? *life as a pilgrim*
8. One girl's wearing a hat. What color is it? *pink and white*

## Answer Box



On the Spot:

You'll find the Buzzword, delectable, on page 44.  
AG Code: A turkey tip: Don't gobble your food!  
curly; 7. *Life as a Pilgrim*; 8. pink and white  
bird, cat; 4. the cat; 5. Home Sweet Home; 6.  
Turkey Test: 1. 20; 2. five turkeys; 3. dog, fish,

Find-it 1: page 31  
Find-it 2: paper doll  
Find-it 3: page 19  
Find-it 4: page 4  
Find-it 5: page 13  
Find-it 6: page 4

Why did the turtle cross the road? To get to the shell station. Megan Hamilton What's white and goes up? A confused snowflake. Erika Newman What's black and

Age 7, Beaumont, Texas

Age 10, Wall, New Jersey

Heather Patton What do you call a cat in the desert? Sandy Claws. Heather Purser What do frogs like to eat with their hamburgers? French flies. Rebecca Connor

Age 8, Irvine, California

Age 12, Idaho Falls, Idaho

Age 9, Houston, Texas

Age 10, Alpena, Michigan



# HELP!

**Dear American Girl,**

My best friend always buys stuff I buy. I like to be an individual, but it's hard with her around!

*Copied*

Your friend likes your style! She may be imitating you because she isn't sure of her own taste. Let her know you feel funny when you're dressed alike. Or just gently encourage her to develop her own style. Let her choose first when you're shopping, and give her a big compliment whenever she buys something that's right for *her*. Keep in mind, though, that what makes a girl truly unique is not what she buys, but who she is!



**Dear American Girl,**

I'm a real worrier. I worry about recitals, sports, and looking good in front of people, and I especially worry about school. Every night I lie awake and cry. What should I do?

*Worrywart in Ohio*

Worry is like a snowball rolling down a hill. It starts out tiny and just gets bigger if you don't stop it. Here's a trick to try: Right this



minute, make a list of things you've worried about in the past. Write down exactly what you worried might happen. Then write down what *actually* happened. Did you worry you'd flunk the spelling test, but you passed anyway? Did you worry about forgetting your music during the recital, and then it went O.K. after all? Next time you start to panic about something, read back over that list. It's proof positive that most of the things you worry about just don't happen!



**Dear American Girl,**

My friend's parents are divorced. I like to spend time with her, but she's being bounced around from parent to parent. I miss her a lot.

*Upset*

If you have a tape recorder, try making tapes for each other to play when you can't spend time together. Or start "friendship diaries." While your friend's away, each of you can use a notebook to write down the things you'd be talking about if you were together. Each time she comes back, trade notebooks or take turns reading what you've written out loud. You'll have a blast catching up on what's happened while you were apart.



**Dear American Girl,**

When I see or hear about girls my age who can do things better than I can, I feel bad. I'm a good jazz dancer, but I feel like that's nothing.

*Rebecca*

When another girl is good at something, it doesn't take a thing away from what *you're* good at. There's plenty of talent to go around! So don't waste your valuable energy feeling bad about other girls' abilities. Throw all that energy into doing what you love. Dance your heart out, and other girls will respect you for it, too!



# MORE HELP!

**Dear American Girl,**

My parents smoke, and I'm afraid of secondhand smoke. When we take trips I have to sit in the middle since we have a truck. Worst of all, kids at school say, "Do your parents smoke? I can smell it." It embarrasses me.

*Smoked Out*

**Let your parents know you're concerned about your health—and theirs. Smokers usually don't quit just because someone wants them to, but it's O.K. to ask them to compromise. On trips, can they wait to smoke until the drive is over? Can they stop along the way and smoke outside the truck? With a little cooperation, you'll all breathe easier.**



**Dear American Girl,**

I have friends who don't like each other. If I hang around one, the other gets jealous. We can't play together because they don't get along. I don't want to choose between them and lose a friend.

*Middle of a War*



**Your friends may be acting jealous because they think you *might* choose between them. Tell each girl how important her friendship is to you, and how unhappy you feel being in the middle of their fights. Say you don't want to choose—and you won't choose! Then agree on times to spend separately with each friend. If each girl knows where you stand, some of the squabbling may come to an end.**



**Dear American Girl,**

Recently I took a trip to Washington, D.C., and saw some very poor people. Some asked for money or food. It made me very sad. Is there anything I can do to help homeless or poor people?

*Lucky in Iowa*

**There are lots of ways a girl can help people right in her own town. Some girls help their families serve food at special meal sites. Some girls collect canned goods for food pantries. If you belong to a church or synagogue, ask a leader there for ideas. Or brainstorm with your teacher or Scout leader about a project the whole group could do!**



**Advice from You**

**"Always get the things you hate done first: chores, homework, cleaning, etc. Then you have time for fun things, like family, friends, and television. And you won't have to worry about what still needs to get done. You're free!"**

*Julianna Benish*  
Age 13, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Need advice? Write:**

## HELP!

**American Girl**

**8400 Fairway Place  
Middleton, WI 53562**

6. Who spent two weeks in Sweden?





*Pilgrims Going to Church*, by George Henry Boughton, 1867

## Imagine *You hear a strange sound in the woods.*

It's 1621. You're in Plymouth, the first Pilgrim village in the New World. You are headed to church on a snowy Sunday morning when the stillness of the woods around your village is shattered by a strange sound. *Shh!* You stop and listen. Is it a wild animal? An Indian?

More than 240 years from now, an artist named George Henry Boughton will try to imagine what life was like for you on this chilly day in Plymouth. When he paints a picture of you and the other Pilgrims, he will put a musket, or gun, in almost every man's hands. Surely, he will think, all the men of your village would have needed to carry muskets to feel safe from the Indians!

But the Indians have been good to all of you. They've shown your father where to hunt deer and turkey. They've taught your mother to plant corn in little hills, with three fish buried in each hill to nourish the plants as they grow. In truth, you're more afraid of sickness than Indians.

Last winter, a terrible sickness killed eight girls and boys in your village. Ten children lost their mothers or fathers. As you hurry toward church, you recall that first dark year in Plymouth with a shiver. You clutch your mother's warm hand tightly and whisper a tiny prayer of thanks that your family has survived. How grateful you are to be alive in this harsh new land! ★





# American Girl®

Coming up in the next issue

## **Have a Heart-y Party**

Valentine fun for you and your friends

## **Hot Stuff for Cold Days**

Great ways to beat the winter blues

## **Red Means Good Luck!**

Three girls celebrate Chinese New Year

## **She Shoots, She Scores!**

Hockey-playing girls tell their tales

## **Winter Parade**

A story about Kirsten

## **Plus:**

Song-lyric contest winners and  
your pop-out paper doll #14